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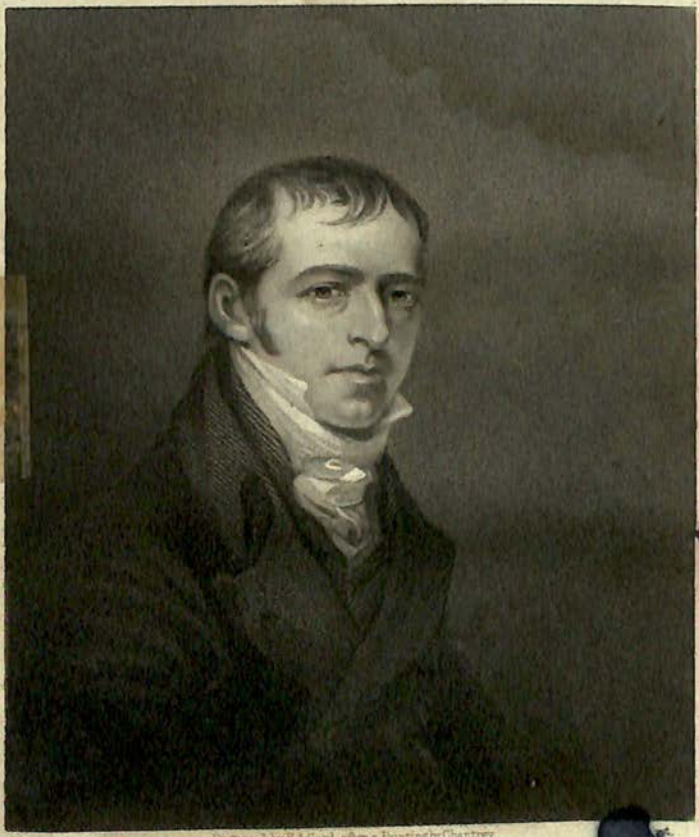

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James Montgomery

(AGED 35.)

LONDON: LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN & LONGMANS.

MEMOIRS

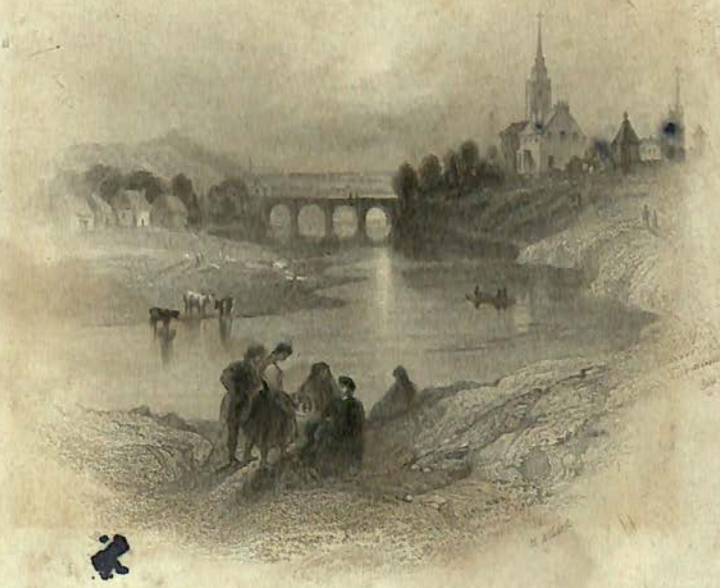
OF

JAMES MONTGOMERY,

BY

John Holland and James Everett.

VOL. I.



Irvine, Ayrshire.

LONDON:
LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN & LONGMANS,
PATERNOSTER ROW.

MEMOIRS

OF

THE LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

JAMES MONTGOMERY,

INCLUDING

SELECTIONS FROM HIS CORRESPONDENCE, REMAINS IN PROSE AND VERSE, AND CONVERSATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

BY

JOHN HOLLAND AND JAMES EVERETT.

VOL. I.

" There is a living spirit in the lyre,
A breath of music and a soul of fire ;
It speaks a language to the world unknown ;
It speaks that language to the bard alone."

World before the Flood.

LONDON:
LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS.
1854.

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PREFACE.

THE Life and Times of James Montgomery present to us materials for one of the most deeply interesting chapters of the social history of this country. For not only was the era in which our author lived one of the most remarkable in the annals of the modern world, but he was, in various ways, identified with some of its leading characteristics. Born nearly thirty years before the close of the last century, he was contemporary with the great and important events which at that period shook Europe to its centre:—what have been significantly called "The Wars of the French Revolution," were consecutively chronicled and commented upon by him, as the editor of a political journal. That signal movement of the human mind, which is usually recognised in its still onward progress by the phrase—"March of Intellect," was participated and accelerated by him, not only in his newspaper, but as a member of literary, philosophical, and educational institutions. Of that brilliant epoch of English poetry, which, commencing with Cowper, culminated in the appearance of Southey,

Coleridge, Wordsworth, Byron, Campbell, Rogers, Crabbe, Moore, and Montgomery himself, he was at once the coeval and the exponent: while with the mighty evangelical awakening, in which originated so many Bible, Missionary, Sunday School, and Tract Societies, besides others of a kindred nature, the name and labours of our friend were specially associated: to which must be added, the influence which a character thus moulded and directed by Christian principles, and sweetened by the amenities of literature and poesy, necessarily gave him in the local councils of the good people of Sheffield, among whom he resided.

It is not intended by these remarks to represent Montgomery as occupying a preeminent position in any one of the proud spheres of interest and influence in question; for in each were to be found some, and in others several, names that ranked higher than his own: but it is not, perhaps, too much to assert, that in no other individual of his time were these latter elements of the spirit of the age so largely and so homogeneously combined.

With this conviction, it was almost impossible not to be impressed with the fact, that the biography of such a man, while it involved of necessity a familiar acquaintance with the transactions of the period in which he lived, and also with his own springs of action, demanded, at the same time, some literary and religious qualifications resembling his own. However confessedly slight our claim to the possession of these qualifications, we dare not deem it so slight as to justify us in sacrificing to a real or affected diffidence in our own abili-

ties, the gratification of attempting a more faithfully circumstantial, if less artistically composed memoir of Montgomery, than could easily have proceeded from any other quarter. Opportunity and industry have at least not been wanting to the accomplishment of our object.

In the autumn of 1820, the Rev. James Everett was, by appointment of the Wesleyan Conference, stationed as a preacher at Sheffield, the native place of John Holland. Among other circumstances, a mutual, in truth an enthusiastic, admiration of "the Christian poet," who was their fellow-worshipper, led to an intimacy which issued in the discovery that each was collecting materials in illustration of the Life of Montgomery. A proposal to proceed in concert with this design was subsequently made and accepted. The friends at once united their stores and their efforts; agreeing that, should either of the parties decease before the completion of their task, the survivor should be entitled to the accumulated materials. This was in 1821, at which time it would hardly have been too much to say, that there was not a man in Sheffield, of Montgomery's age and habits, less likely to have been living thirty years afterwards than himself. After residing about five years in the town, Mr. Everett was removed, having in the interval largely enjoyed, and, as the following pages will testify, faithfully cultivated the friendship of the poet, between whom, also, and Mr. Holland, at that period, and thenceforward during more than a quarter of a century, an intercourse of the most frank and confidential nature existed,—rarely a

week, and often only a day or two, passing without an interview, when the parties were at home. And here again, during the protracted enjoyment of this prized and privileged friendship, the ultimate design of raising a monument to the memory of the beloved bard was never lost sight of. Indeed, without here adverting to evidence of direct concurrence, to suppose that the poet himself had no suspicion of such design, especially amidst the unguarded conversation of later years, would be to attribute to him the absence of even an ordinary degree of perspicacity. The biographers have therefore no ground of apology for either ignorance or haste, —whatever they may have in the peculiarity of their position,—should they have mistaken a merely laudable aim for the ability required to do justice to their subject.

Such was the relation in which they stood to each other, and to the design of this work, previous to 1849. In that year, Mr. Everett was deprived of his office as a preacher in the Wesleyan body, with which he had been in connection during the greater part of half a century, in consequence of a conscientious resistance to what he, along with thousands of his Methodist brethren, ministers as well as members, considered an act of despotism on the part of the Conference. In the determined stand thus made, and the heroic self-sacrifice in which, as foreseen, it immediately involved Mr. Everett, considered *per se*, the sympathies of Mr. Holland and, it must be added, of Montgomery also, were fully and freely extended to their common friend. Not so their concurrence with the particular

line of action and tone of appeal which he, with other expelled ministers, thought it right presently to adopt in agitating and dismembering the Connection — conduct which it was admitted the personal provocation, spiritual relations, and honest convictions of the actors, might perhaps sufficiently justify to themselves.

But, however portentous to the parties concerned, the Methodistic movement alluded to bore a no less perplexing aspect in relation to the authorship of the work now in the reader's hands. For not only had a large portion of the personal religious intercourse of Mr. Holland and Montgomery been enjoyed in Wesleyan circles, — though neither of them were, at any time, actually members of the Society, — but a considerable part, not to say the most conspicuous and useful part, of the public platform labours of the latter, were devoted to the service of various institutions among that people: and of these interesting engagements, records made at the time, and under the immediate feelings of the occasion, must needs very frequently occur in the following pages. Hence, an obvious dilemma. In the event of the publication of the Memoirs of Montgomery as the joint labour of the two persons whose names are on the title-page, and without any such explanation as the present, either Mr. Everett must have appeared in a character strangely inconsistent with that which accidental circumstances had compelled him to adopt and maintain, — very conscientiously, no doubt, — or else Mr. Holland, differently circumstanced as he was, must have consented, at least, to the omission or alteration of much

original matter, which, both as illustrative of the zeal and piety of Montgomery himself, and in no way essentially affected by the unhappy accidents above alluded to, he could not but more than wish to retain in its integrity; and, indeed, to enlarge as occurrences might demand. This sentiment was converted into a conscientious determination, when he received, most unexpectedly, an intimation from Montgomery, that he meant to appoint him executor of his last will; this trust being connected with antecedent circumstances, which, tacitly at least, implied the poet's recognition of his friend as the fittest individual in whom to confide for the discreet appropriation of his literary remains, and for the faithful history of his protracted life.

Influenced by these considerations, Mr. Everett did not hesitate to meet with entire confidence Mr. Holland's anxious proposal to be allowed exclusively to prepare the work for the press: the latter must, therefore, be regarded as personally responsible for every fact and sentiment in the following pages, not otherwise appropriated, as well as for the selection and arrangement of the matter generally: at the same time, it may be proper to remark that, with the exception specifically noted above, the biographers do not entertain any important differences of opinion relative to what is here published in their joint names.

J. H.

Sheffield, Sept. 28. 1854.

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MEMOIRS

OF

THE LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

JAMES MONTGOMERY.

CHAPTER I.

1771—1775.

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MONTGOMERY, as a surname, very variously spelled, occurs under circumstances of interest in almost every period of British History, at least from the Conquest downwards. Whence it was originally derived, may be doubtful*; but it was gallantly borne by a kinsman of the Duke of Normandy at the battle of Hastings†: it occurs in the list of *tenentes in capite*, in Doomsday Book‡: it is that of heroes in the rare old ballads of "The

* Not far from Loretto, in Italy, there is a lofty hill called *Monte Gomero*, the ancient "cumerium promontorium;" it is close to the sea, and has an abbey on its summit. — Eustace, *Class. Tour*, vol. i. p. 298.

† Roger, fifth Count de Montgomerie, created Earl of Arundel and Shrewsbury.

‡ Hugo de Montgomeri had lands in Staffordshire.

Battle of Otterburne,"* and "Chevy Chase:"† it occurs in the early records of the Peerage ‡, and Landed Gentry, in reference to different parts of the United Kingdom §: it was enrolled on the side of royalty at

"Then was ther a Scottyshe prisoner tayne,
Syr Hughe Mongomery was hys name,
For soth as I yow say,
He borowed the Percy home agyne."

"An arrow, that a cloth yarde was long,
To the hard stele halyded he;
A dynt, that was both sad and sore,
He sat on Sir Hewe Mongon-byrry.
The dynt it was both sad and soar,
That he on Mongon-byrry sete;
The swane feathers that his arrowe bar,
With his hart blood were wet."

‡ Montgomery, an Englishman, is represented in one of the scenes of Schiller's "Maid of Orleans," as acting a most craven part in the presence of the heroine of the poem—first soliloquising in dread at the sight of the armed damsel in the distance—then falling at her feet and suing for his life—receiving and deprecating her bitter reproaches—then rushing, sword in hand, upon the woman-warrior,—and finally, falling in the conflict with one, who

"Born a shepherd maid;
Her hand accustomed to the peaceful crook,
And all unused to wield the sword of death."

As both Sir John Talbot, the first Earl of Shrewsbury, and his son, perished on the field of Patay, and as the German poet does not exactly specify which of them he means, it is doubtful whether he alludes to the valiant and venerable Shakspearian hero, or to his no less gallant son: in either case he is unjustified alike by history or tradition. Southey, who in his "Joan of Arc" has chosen to represent the younger Talbot as falling by the sword of the heroine, at least does poetical justice to both these bearers of a formidable name.

§ In an old MS. at Grey Abbey, written about the year 1696, by William Montgomery of that place, we read, "For the honour of the nation in general, let it be known to all, that there is at this day the title of a count or earl of the name in all His Majesty's four kingdoms: viz. Count de Montgomery in France, Earl of

the outbreak of the great civil strife of the seventeenth century, in England*: soon after the Restoration, it was notably distinguished both in Ireland† and Scotland‡: with no less credit it is identified with the cause of independence in the history of the American war §: and lastly,—not to mention other instances,—it is impossible, in this brief prelude to the memoirs of the latest distinguished member of the *gens Montgomerie*, to forget what a literary charm is always evoked for the name, in the mention of her who bore it, as "Sidney's sister — Pembroke's mother;" or not to remember how early it was entwined with the poetic laurel, in the person of the rough old Scottish author of "The Cherrie and the Slae."||

From none of these worthies, however, is it in our power satisfactorily to deduce the blood of the individual whose memoirs we are about to write: a lineage without either the adventitious distinction of high rank, or the less envied pride of genealogical antiquity, though not

Montgomery in England, Earl of Eglintoun in Scotland, and Earl of Mount Alexander in Ireland; the like whereof cannot be truly said, as I believe, of any other surname in all the world."—Burke's *Commoners of Great Britain and Ireland*, vol. iv. p. 185.

* Hugh Montgomery was an officer in the king's army, where he distinguished himself in 1641.

† George Montgomery was Protestant Bishop of Clogher.

‡ Francis and Hugh Montgomery were among the agents appointed for effecting the treaty of union with Scotland in the reign of Queen Anne, the former being president of the commissioners. —Agnes Strickland's *Anne*, p. 186.

§ General Montgomery fell in December 1775, in the attempt to retake Quebec from the English, soon after the death of Wolfe. It may be mentioned that at least a score places, of more or less importance, in the United States, bear the appellation of "Montgomery."

|| Alexander Montgomery, one of the most popular of the old poets of Scotland: he probably died about 1605.

devoid of its own merit*, is all that we can claim for him who, for half a century, has made the name of James Montgomery a fond and familiar expression with the ingenious, the benevolent, and the pious, wherever the English language has carried the precious compositions of the "Christian Poet."

As Montgomery believed that his ancestors originally sprung from the vicinity of his own birth-place, there seems nothing very improbable in the supposition that he may have had a common progenitor with that illustrious branch of the family, who could boast, as he used to say, "the reddest blood in Scotland," whose crest and motto † he on one occasion appropriated, and whom he was wont jocularly to call "the head of our clan." Eglintoun is a lordship and castle in the county of Ayr, the lords of the name and possession of which at a very early period acquired lands from the community of Irvine: and these possessions have descended to the present Earl of Eglintoun, through the marriage of a female ancestor to John Montgomery, a lineal descendant of Roger, the hero of the field of Hastings. We must now turn for awhile to the history of some of the humbler bearers of this honoured name, in the North of Ireland.

* "My boast is not that I derive my birth
From loins enthroned, or rulers of the earth;
But higher still my proud pretensions rise—
The son of parents pass'd into the skies."—COWPER.

† "Gardez bien." In allusion to this motto a Scottish poet says:—

"Eight centuries gather round the crest!
And still 'tis 'guarded well,'
Since first Montgomery forward prest,
Where dauntless Harold fell
On Hastings' field,—and earned a name,
That rivalled e'en the Conqueror's fame."

Ayrshire Wreath.

Of his ancestors, Montgomery himself knew but little. He had heard it said that his great-grandfather "was a gentleman," and had wasted an estate; and that some of his progenitors, like the members of the noble house whose name he bore, had married Cunninghams.

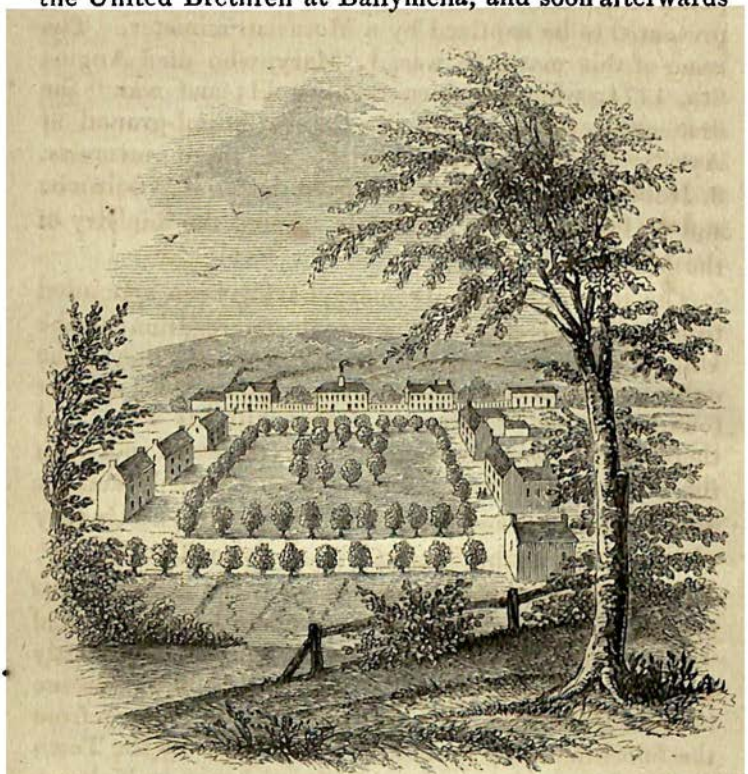
Holland: "Did you ever know any of your relatives of that name?" *Montgomery:* "No; our relations, when I was a child, were the Spences, the M'Mullins, and the Blackleys, in the neighbourhood of Grace Hill."

In 1746, John Cennick, who was originally a pious teacher in the Methodist school at Kingswood*, near Bristol, and afterwards a preacher in connexion with both Wesley and Whitfield†, having joined the Moravians, went over to Ireland, and founded a "settlement" of the Brethren under the designation of "Grace Hill," at the village of Ballykennedy, in the parish of Ahoghill, county of Antrim. Among the persons to whom the simple fervent preaching of the missionary —for so he might be called—was rendered instrumental of a religious change, was John Montgomery, a young man of that parish, born January 22nd, 1734, and engaged, as we believe his father had been, in humble but useful industry, in the same locality. He

* Near to Kingswood Old School stood for many years, perhaps it stands there yet, a large elm, known as "Cennick's tree," because under its shadow the preacher used in his fervid simplicity to address his hearers. More than seventy years afterwards, the Rev. John James Montgomery, the only grandson of the good man named in the next page, was located as a Moravian minister at Kingswood.

† Cennick was a favourite with Whitfield, who thus describes him: "He is a truly great soul! One of those weak things which God has chosen to confound the strong. Such a hardy worker with his hands, and such a hearty preacher at the same time, I have scarce known. All call him a second Bunyan."—Philip's *Life and Times of Whitfield*, p. 370. It was from an expression in a sermon of Cennick's that the Methodists in Ireland were called "swaddlers."

was received, February 9th, 1757, into communion with the United Brethren at Ballymena, and soon afterwards



MORAVIAN SETTLEMENT, GRACE HILL, BALLYMENA, IRELAND.

became a preacher among them. After visiting Yorkshire and Germany, under the direction of his religious superiors, he returned to Grace Hill; and on the 27th of December, 1768, married Mary Blackley*, the daughter of a highly respectable member of the little community there; whose wife Montgomery remembered

* Born Oct. 9, 1742, in Ahoghill parish.

as a grave and serious matron, who was accustomed to perform the office of holding the child at the font when presented to be baptized by a Moravian minister. The issue of this marriage was, 1. Mary, who died August 6th, 1771, when eighteen months old; and was "the first grain sown in the Brethren's burial-ground at Ayr." 2. James, the subject of these memoirs. 3. Robert, who became a provision dealer at Woolwich; and 4. Ignatius, who ultimately entered the ministry of the Moravian Church.

The Rev. John Montgomery, having been appointed to the pastoral charge of a small congregation of the United Brethren at Irvine, a seaport in Ayrshire, "the only spot in Scotland where those godly men at first found a footing,"* removed thither with his wife; and there, in the dwelling-house under the same roof with the little chapel, their eldest son was born November 4th, 1771,—the anniversary of the birth, exactly fifty years before, of the Sheffield poet, James Cawthorne.† His nativity probably coincided with the arrival of his parents in Scotland; for we have heard him say he had "very nearly been an Irishman." ‡ By such apparently slight "accidents" does a man sometimes become identified with his native country! It will be seen from the following reply to an inquiry addressed to the Town Clerk of Irvine, that the old Chapel-house in Halfway Street still exists:—

* Irwine, Monthly News Letter, Nov. 27. 1846.

† Chalmers' *Poets*, vol. xiv. p. 230.

‡ Byron, it will be remembered, boasts (in "Don Juan") of being himself "half a Scot by birth, and bred a whole one." On the other hand, Canning, writing to Sir Walter Scott, when in Ireland in 1825, says, "I rejoice to see that my countrymen (for though I was accidentally born in London, I consider myself an *Irishman*) have so well known the honour you are paying them." —*Life of Scott*, vol. viii. p. 129.

"Irvine, May 23rd, 1854.

"SIR,

"I should have answered yours of the 18th sooner, but as I wished to gratify your feelings I delayed till I had made inquiry whether I could find a sketch of the birth-place of our late venerated poet, Mr. James Montgomerie. I now beg to enclose a pen-and-ink sketch of the house in which he was born, and the chapel of which his father was the pastor. They still preserve their primitive appearance, the one end still occupied as a dwelling-house, and the other as a weaver's shop.

"I am, Sir,

"Your most obedient Servant,

"DAVID GRAY.

"John Holland, Esq."

OLD CHAPEL-HOUSE IN WHICH MONTGOMERY WAS BORN, IRVINE, AYRSHIRE, SCOTLAND.

Some of the good people of Irvine, justly proud of the poet's reputation, have placed a tablet on the wall, to remind visitors in "the Land of Burns," of the genius and the worth of a countryman, whose merits it would perhaps be ungracious to contrast, but whose name and reputation it is obvious here to associate, with those of the "Ayrshire Ploughman." *

Galt, who was a native of Irvine, has recorded, in his "Autobiography," some infantile reminiscences of his mother's house: on reading these, Montgomery said that he, too, remembered some things in connexion with *his* mother's house there, quite as early in life.

"The moment of his birth
None can remember,—none
Recal his earliest glance from earth
Up to yon glorious sun:
Nor trace that point of memory,
When infant thought began to be.

"Unknowing when, how, where,
Whence come, or whither bound,
A breather of the common air,
Himself unsought, the found,
A frame in which, as sprung from nought,
The miracle of life was wrought.

"Thence, by an impulse strange,
Without his choice or will,
From step to step, and change to change,
On is he carried still,
Nor of the future can forecast
One moment certain, — save the last.

* Burns was at this time about twelve years of age, and, if he had left Murdoch's school at Ayr, was reciting, on his father's farm, within a dozen miles of Montgomery's birth-place, those songs and tales of old Jenny Wilson which, with the moralising ballads sung by his mother, doubtless became the first germs of his own poetical fancies.

"The day, month, year unknown,
In which concealed it lies,
Like a March-meteor, dim and lone,
Which as he follows flies,
Yet seems to stand, — it lures him on,
Comes with a breath, — and lo! 'tis gone."

Fragment, ex MS.

One of the biographers having furnished an illustration of the Scripture phrase, "thy speech bewrayeth thee," Montgomery said, in a half-interrogative, half-affirmative manner, "You are nearly Scotch, Mr. Everett;" the latter replied, "I was only just saved from being a Scotchman." *Montgomery:* "I was born in Scotland, and barely escaped being an Irishman." *Everett:* "In all probability, you passed through Alnwick, the town where I was born, on your route to England." *Montgomery:* "No; I left Scotland, when I was better than four years of age, and went into Ireland with my parents, where I remained till I was six." *Everett:* "Do you recollect anything of either place, at that early age?" *Montgomery:* "Yes; but my recollections are, of course, those of childhood."

We were not a little amused with these early recollections, over some of which he himself laughed heartily when relating them. "When at Irvine," said he, "I remember being remarkably struck with the full moon rising over the hills, and especially with her red appearance; and on another occasion, when she was in the form of a crescent, at a considerable height, only a few days old. — There was, on one occasion, a great flood in the river, which did considerable damage to property, and powerfully impressed me, while I saw its waters rolling onward to the ocean. — Inanimate nature was not the only thing that attracted my attention. On King George's birth-

day, the people threw open their windows, while the soldiers fired over the houses: this produced a martial spirit; I got my little drum, and resolved to be a soldier. — I was early a dreamer, and had my dreams by night as well as by day. In one of the former, I fancied myself pursued by a herd of cattle; I awoke in terror, and carried about me a dread of such an occurrence ever afterwards. — But one thing, which above all others affected me at that early period, was a small image or figure something like *Punch*. I had wandered from home, and came to a part of the town where another street crossed the one along which I was walking. On casually turning my eye upward towards a window in one of the corner houses, there I saw the automaton clapping his hands, and making the street ring again with the noise: a look was sufficient — I turned round — ran home — told my father and mother what I had seen; — and whenever I acted improperly I was sure to be threatened with the little fellow, which always effectually silenced me, and kept his clappers alive in my ears — a noise which I seem to hear at this day."* At the top of the steps leading to the Tolbooth, there are two large balls, or knobs of stone — one on each hand: these somewhat striking† objects had so far attracted Montgomery's infantile attention, that he perfectly recollected them when, late in life, he revisited, for the first and only time, the place of his nativity.

* Rabelais mentions the *Maschrouste*, an image whose jaws made a terrible rattle, and which used to be carried about in fairs on the continent.— RAB. vol. iv. b. iv. ch. lix.

† Literally "striking," if a somewhat poor pun may be tolerated, for our friend distinctly remembered the reply of some Irvine dame to his childish inquiry, "what were those large balls placed there for?"— "The heads of culprits are knocked against them when taken to prison!"

The little town of Irvine became distinguished during the troubles of the Scotch Kirk in the seventeenth century, in connexion with the attractive preaching and determined protest of its then minister, the celebrated David Dickson, successively theological professor in the universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh: and still further, as participating in that memorable religious movement, usually called, from an adjacent parish, the "Stewarton Revival," 1625—30; and in which the zealous and able minister above-named took an active part. It may be added, that Montgomery was delighted when, in 1828, he accidentally discovered that his ancient and godly townsman was the author of a series of stanzas, from which, by various transmutations through different hands, has been derived one of the most beautiful hymns in our language, "Jerusalem, my happy home," &c.* Another minister of Irvine, one hundred and fifty years afterwards, identified the town with a movement of a widely different character; — we refer to Mr. White, the first conspicuous adherent of the notorious Elspeth Buchan, who in 1783 promulgated a set of blasphemous reveries analogous to those afterwards put forth by Johanna Southcote and her followers. The Buchanites existed many years — White having, we believe, transplanted a small branch of the sect with himself to America.

We have already mentioned Montgomery's poetical namesake of the seventeenth century: he, too, is one of whom the people of Ayrshire may, in some respects, justly be proud. On the announcement of an edition of the old Scotchman's poems in 1821, we asked our friend whether he was acquainted with them? "Yes," said he, "they have often been reprinted. The first know-

* Christian Poet, 3rd edit. p. 204.

ledge I had of Alexander Montgomery was on seeing a notice of his Poems in an old catalogue, when I was a boy: I was delighted to find that there was a poet of my own name, and would at that time almost have given a finger to possess his works. Dr. David Irving kindly sent me a copy of his elegant edition of the poet*, which is at your service. There are several elegant little pieces in the volume." Not having read the Poems before, on returning them, a degree of surprise and pleasure was expressed, on having found that the old bard was born in the same shire with himself. *Montgomery:* "The Montgomerys are a powerful clan in Ayrshire." *Everett:* "There is some very offensive language employed in Polwart and Montgomerie's 'Flyting;' and yet the latter composed many religious pieces." *Montgomery:* "The truth is, we are neither so pious nor so wicked as they were in that age; there is certainly a strong mixture of the profane and the devout in his works. The very first piece I opened upon was his 'Flyting,' and it was some time before I could understand what he meant, from the language. You have to pay great attention, too, to get the ear properly tuned to his measure." *Everett:* "I was much amused with the etymology of your name, in the last stanza of Polwart's 'Third Flyting against Montgomerie': —

'Whose origine noble, the note of his name,
Cal'd Etimologie, beires rightlie record:
His surname doth flow fra two terms of diffame, —
From *Mont* and *Gomora*, where devils, be the Lord,

* On the blank leaf, preceding the title page, the Doctor wrote "To James Montgomery, Esq., author of 'The World before the Flood,' &c.; as a mark of the Editor's respect for his character as a Poet. Edin. July, 1821."

His kinsmen, was cleinlie cast out; to his shame,
That is of their clane, whom Christ hath abhorde;
And beiris of the birth-place their horrible name,
Where Sodomite sinners with stinking were smor'd.

"Now sen all is suith that's said of this smy,
Vnto that capped clarke,
And prettie piece of warke,
That bitterlie doth barke;
I may thus reply.'" (p. 126.)

CHAP. II.

1775—1777.

HISTORY, DOCTRINES, AND PERSECUTIONS OF THE MORAVIAN CHURCH. — COMENIUS. — ZINZENDORF. — FIRST APPEARANCE OF THE BRETHREN IN ENGLAND. — THEIR TRIALS, CONDUCT, AND RECOGNITION. — PECULIARITIES AS A COMMUNITY. — DAILY TEXT BOOK. — LOVE FEASTS. — THE LOT. — MISSIONS. — GRACE HILL. — MONTGOMERY'S EARLIEST SCHOOLMASTER. — ARRIVES AT FULNECK SCHOOL. — DEPARTURE OF HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AS MISSIONARIES TO THE WEST INDIES.

THE history of the United Brethren, Herrnhuters, Moravians, Bohemians, or Germans — for by all these appellations have the community been designated — forms a very striking episode in the earlier chronicles of the Christian Church. It exhibits, indeed, the sublime spectacle of a little flock, or rather scattered groups, of the true followers of their Saviour, witnessing a good confession for His name's sake, amidst the prevalent errors of Popery, or the persecution of ungodly rulers; and submitting to ignominy, spoliation, and martyrdom, long before the name of *Protestant* had been given to that great and glorious band of heroic confessors with whom we are now so gratefully familiar.

Originally descended from the Slavonian branch of the Greek Church, the Moravian Brethren never implicitly submitted to the authority of the Pope, though their Princes, from the year 967, adhered to the Roman Communion; but they resolutely retained the Bible in their hands, and performed their Church service accord-

ing to the ritual of their fathers, and in their mother tongue. For these heresies, as they were deemed, they were persecuted without mercy, and almost without intermission; many were punished with death, more with the spoiling of their goods, and multitudes with imprisonment and exile. In their sufferings were literally exemplified the declarations of the apostles concerning the ancient worthies, "*they had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment; they were stoned, were tempted, were slain by the sword; being destitute, afflicted, tormented* (*of whom the world was not worthy*); *they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.*" Among these confessors and martyrs, in the fourteenth century, appeared John Huss, who was condemned to the flames as an heretic. During the war that ensued after his death, the Church of the United Brethren, under its present name, was formed by those who chose rather to suffer as witnesses of the truth, than to defend the truth by weapons of worldly warfare. A bloody decree was issued against them, at the Diet in 1468, and commanded to be read from all the pulpits in the land. The prisons in Bohemia were crowded with the members of their Church, and their first Bishop, Michael, remained in close confinement until the death of the king Podiebrad. Many perished in deep dungeons with hunger; others were inhumanly tortured. The remainder fled to the thickest forests, where, fearing to be betrayed in the day-time, they kindled their fires only at night, round which they spent their hours in reading the Scriptures, and in prayer. When they afterwards obtained some respite from persecution, they were the first people who employed the newly-invented art of printing for the publication of *the Bible* in a living tongue, and *three editions of the*

Bohemian Scriptures were issued by them before the Reformation.

When Luther, Melancthon, Bucer, and Calvin at length arose to testify more successfully than they had been able to do, against the errors and usurpations of the Church of Rome, to each of these illustrious men the Brethren submitted their doctrinal tenets, their Church discipline, and the records of their affairs, and from each, in return, they received assurances of cordial approbation and the kindest encouragement.

But as the Reformation did not penetrate into the recesses of Bohemia and Moravia, they had to suffer renewed and aggravated persecution, till, towards the close of the 17th century, they were so broken up, hunted down, and scattered abroad, that they ceased to be known publicly as an existing Church. Their devotions at the peril of life and liberty, were performed by stealth, in private dwellings, in deep forests, and lonely caverns, a few only daring to assemble in one place, and at one time. Previous to this dispersion, their bishop, John Amos Comenius, one of the most distinguished scholars of that age, published a History of the Brethren, with a dedication (which he called his last will and testament) to the *Church of England,* bequeathing to it the memorials of his people, in the following affecting terms:—"If, by the grace of God, there hath been found in us (as wise and godly men have sometimes thought) anything true, anything honest, anything just, anything pure, anything lovely and of good report; if any virtue and any praise, care must be taken that it may not die with us when we die; and, at least, that the very foundations of our Church be not buried under its present ruins, so that generations to come may not know where to look for them. And

indeed, this care is taken, and provision is made on this behalf, by this our trust committed to your hands."

Sixty years afterwards, the Church of the Brethren was raised, as it were, from the dead, by a persecution intended to crush its last remnant in Moravia. Some families flying from thence, found refuge on the estates of Count Zinzendorf in Lusatia, where they built a church and a humble village, calling it Herrnhut, a German compound signifying "The Lord's Watch."* This is now the principal settlement of the Brethren in Europe. As their countrymen, together with some pious people from other quarters, joined them, their congregations gradually multiplied through Germany, and a few were established in Denmark, Sweden, Russia, Holland, and North America.

The Brethren first appeared in England about the middle of the last century, when presently the most malignant slanders were circulated against them†; but

* A recent and candid account of Herrnhut, "one of the most interesting places which the student of human nature will find in all Germany," occurs in Gleig's "Germany, Bohemia, and Hungary visited in 1837," vol. ii. p. 213. (*Vide* also Spangenberg's "Life of Count Zinzendorf," Walker's translation.)

† The most formidable of these popular accusations charged the Brethren with a secret inclination to Popery; parties grounding their suspicions, or at least affecting to do so, upon the fact that some single men lived together in one house, and some single women in another, which, in the opinion of ignorant people, bore a resemblance to Romish convents. They were likewise reproached with being foreigners. To allay the excitement which existed on these topics in 1780, the Rev. George Traneker, at that time the minister at Fulneck, and afterwards one of the Moravian bishops, issued a printed address to the public, in which he says:—

"In the first place, it is well known, that by far not all the single men and single women, who belong to the Brethren's congregation, live in this manner in separate houses, but only such of them who make it, for the present, their particular choice, for

in the simplicity of conscious innocence, and shrinking from no scrutiny, they laid their case before Parliament. Their doctrines, discipline, character, and history, were scrupulously examined in committees of both Houses; and two bills, exempting them from taking oaths and

the sake of having the company of people of their own condition. — And,

" Secondly, those, who live together in this manner, are constantly at perfect liberty, in an orderly way, to go in and out of their respective houses (the doors being open all the day), or even to leave their present habitations entirely, and to go and live somewhere else, if they choose it; and they may likewise marry, and a great many of them are from time to time married. — And,

" Thirdly, all of them, from the time of their coming to live in any of these houses, to the time of their leaving it again, have and enjoy all that is their own, and whatever they may get or earn, with the free and entire disposal of it, and live, like all other orderly families, from their own income or earnings, without the most distant notion of any such thing as community of goods, which has no existence among the Brethren.

" Whoever knows the Brethren, must also know, that the essentials of religion take up so much of their serious attention, that to lay any religious stress upon this or that mode of dressing, if it be but consistent with Christian modesty and decorum, would be to them an absurdity, of which they cannot easily be guilty."

After formally averring the dislike of the Brethren to Popish tenets and practices, and asserting their primitive Protestantism, Mr. Traneker adds: —

" As to the members of the Brethren's congregation in Fulneck, they are, like all the rest of the Brethren in the British dominions, his Britannic Majesty's very loyal and faithful Protestant subjects; and but very few of them are foreigners, and not one of these carries on, or even serves as a journeyman in any of the staple-manufactures of this country; and these few persons are Lutherans, so denominated from Dr. Martin Luther, the first venerable reformer in Germany, whose confession of faith is the well-known Protestant Augsburg Confession, which is fully received by the Church of the Brethren, and is one and the same thing in substance with the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England."

bearing arms*, were carried with the unanimous consent of the Bishops. † Indeed, all opposition was abandoned after the final investigation of their claims; and they were fully acknowledged by the British Legislature to be an ancient Protestant Episcopal Church, which had been countenanced and believed by the Kings of England, his Majesty's predecessors. The Brethren have at present congregations in England, Scotland, and Ireland.

The leading theological tenets of the Moravians are comprised in the ancient *Confession of Augsburg*, attributed to Melancthon. On the whole, in their creed ‡,

* Act 20 Geo. II. cap. 44. 1747; 22 Geo. II. cap. 30. 1749; and 43 Geo. III. cap. 120. 1803. "The Brethren's Church," said Montgomery on a particular occasion, "was always a *Peace Society*, according to the petition in her Litany—'Let us find with men that peace which we have with Thee, and with the rest of thy creatures.'" It is remarkable, also, that in a collect of six clauses "to be prayed in time of war," there is no petition for "victory"—no allusion to the "success of our arms" against the enemy; yet have the Moravians ever been emphatically a loyal and orderly people. Their oldest English service book not only contains a prayer to the effect that their "dear Lord and God" would "watch graciously over emperors, kings, and princes" generally; but that he would especially "pour down his blessings in a plentiful manner upon our gracious sovereign," as well as "guide and keep all our dear magistrates."

† See a Congratulatory Letter from Archbishop Pottar to Nicholas Lewis, one of the Moravian bishops, on his consecration, which will be found in the preface to Crantz's "History of the Brethren." Letters patent for the relief of this Church were issued by Charles II. under the recommendation of Archbishop Sancroft and Bishop Compton, and by George I. under that of Archbishop Wake.

‡ Speaking on one occasion (in 1840) of the articles of belief of certain Churches, Montgomery said he considered the creed of the Brethren, which was introduced in the Easter service of the congregations, the most scriptural, the most comprehensive, and at the same time the most intelligible of any which he had ever seen. He did not recollect where, when, or by whom it was composed.

sacraments, and clerical order, they much resemble the Church of England; from which, however, in other respects they differ widely. But we hear less of their doctrinal peculiarities * than of their practical piety. Presided over by a bishop or other minister, they mostly live together in isolated communities. These "Settlements," as they are called, and which usually comprise a chapel, grave-ground, schools, dwellings for the married members, and houses for "Single Brethren" and "Single Sisters"—*Bruder-Haus*, *Schwester-Haus*, and *Prediger-Haus* (Germ.), are not only amenable to a ruling Synod in Germany, but the religious sympathies of the whole body in every part of the world are made to vibrate in unison by means of "watch-words" in the "Text Book," a small volume published annually, and containing, besides rubrics indicative of the ordinary Christian festivals, and notices of special commemoration services for great events in the history of the Brethren's Church, verses of Scripture and of hymns for every day in the year.†

All the members of the Fraternity are, for the con-

* A very remarkable—not to say unprecedented—instance of the abandonment of an important difference on doctrinal points between two parties in the Brethren's Church is on record, and is annually commemorated in the congregations on the 13th of August. In 1827, Montgomery wrote a "Centenary Ode for the memorial day of the union of all hearts and minds in the congregation of the United Brethren at Herrnhut, among whom, since their revival five years previously, considerable differences had prevailed on minor points, which were all blessedly reconciled at the Holy Sacrament in the parish church of Bethelsdorf, in 1727." The stanzas are printed in "Original Hymns:"—

"The God of our forefathers praise,
Thou Brethren's congregation!" &c.

† The Religious Tract Society has for several years past published an Almanac, with texts of Scripture, on the plan of the calendar of "Daily Words" in use among the Moravians.

venience of order, discipline, and edification, arranged in bands, or "choirs," as they are called, according to the following prayer in their Litany :—

"Bring and keep all our choirs in true discipline and holiness. Bless the holy matrimony. Let our little ones grow up in the nurture and admonition of Thee. Keep the single Brethren and Sisters chaste, both in body and spirit. Remain the hope of the widows."—*Litany.*

Love-feasts, derived from the *Agapæ* of the primitive Church, and well known among the modern Methodists, have always been kept by the Moravians. There is one peculiarity which distinguishes the Moravian Christians from all others in the *modus operandi* of their Church government, and one which it would, perhaps, be the most difficult to approve or defend—namely, an appeal to *the lot*, and that in matters the most important, including even the taking of wives by the Brethren. We believe, however, that this species of sortilege, to which indeed religious persons of other denominations have occasionally resorted, has nearly, if not altogether, ceased in practice.

The Moravians were the first among the Reformed Churches to send missionaries to the heathen, among whom they have laboured since 1732, when the refugees on Count Zinzendorf's estates scarcely amounted to 600 persons—that is, in about eight or nine years after they had begun their settlement, they had sent missionaries to Greenland, to the Indians in North and South America, to many of the West India Islands, to Lapland, to Algiers, to Guinea, to the Cape of Good Hope, to Ceylon, and subsequently to Tartary; to the Nicobar Islands, to Persia, and to Egypt. Of the success, vicissitudes, or failure of these missions respectively, we need not speak here; suffice it to say that

more devoted, disinterested, self-sacrificing, and single-minded Christian labourers, never went forth on this evangelical enterprise. Latterly, almost every denomination of Christians has more or less emulated the Brethren in holy zeal for the conversion of the world; and, like them, they have "received seals to their ministry, and souls for their hire;" but none, like these modern apostles, have been found willing, or have found it necessary to go forth solitarily, unprovided with secular aid; taking with them only that primitive equipment which their Lord and Master specified when "He called unto Him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits, and commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse; but be shod with sandals, and not put on two coats." *

* *St. Mark* vi. 7. In this age of missionary activity, as well among Churchmen as Dissenters, the former must often feel the want of some direct petition on the subject in their beautiful liturgic service. The old "Church Litany of the Brethren" contains the following clauses: —

"Keep our doors open among the heathen, and open those that are still shut.

"Do not leave those heathen desolate, from whom we are driven away.

"Have mercy on the negroes, savages, slaves, and gipsies."

In the Litany, as printed with the Hymn-book of 1754, the first petition stands as above; the second is omitted; and "gipsies" is dropped from the third. In later editions the missionary prayer is thus modified: —

"Prosper the endeavours of all thy servants to spread the Gospel among heathen nations.

"Bless our congregations gathered from the Negroes, Greenlanders, Indians, Hottentots, and Esquimaux: keep them as the apple of thine eye." In the last revision of the Litany, the five denominations of converts specifically mentioned above were, somewhat to the regret of Montgomery, omitted altogether.

These prominent features of Montgomery's mother Church are more particularly indicated here, because, as we shall find, they produced a decided effect upon the poet's early life and after character; and doubtless, through him, upon other religious communities.

John and Mary Montgomery remained at Irvine until their second son, Robert, was born, when they returned to Grace Hill, and here James received the earliest rudiments of education beyond his mother's affectionate teaching, from "Jemmy M'Caffery," the village schoolmaster; the Moravians not having at that time any seminary at Grace Hill. Opposite to the settlement stands Gilgoram Castle, less hidden by trees at that time than it is now, and within whose walls a detachment of military was stationed in the childhood of Montgomery. As the castle and the soldiers—the latter especially—were among the most interesting objects to the eye; so the band of music to which he often listened was, as might be expected, the most enchanting to the ear of the child. It was at this time that the trees which now flourish around Grace Hill, were planted, in which work his father, with the other Brethren, assisted. While standing by his father one day, he recollected him turning up a coin with the soil, which excited some interest; but of what reign or state it was, he never learnt. Such an incident would perhaps have made an antiquary of one differently constituted, but Montgomery was destined more particularly to be wrought upon by music and by song.

James being now between six and seven years of age, it was determined to send him to school in England. He accordingly took a child's farewell of his mother, who had on her lap his infant brother Ignatius, who was also born at Grace Hill, and then embarked with his father for Liverpool, where they landed in safety, though

not without experiencing some danger while at sea. After a very brief sojourn at Duckenfield, father and son proceeded to Fulneck, near Leeds, in Yorkshire, where they arrived October 16. 1777,—a day and month memorable as those on which, as Montgomery used to say, his English life commenced, and on which, seventeen years afterwards, he was arrested as a libeller! Speaking of the voyage to England, "We had," said he, "a terrible storm. I was, as might be expected, much afraid at first; but my father told me to trust in the Lord Jesus, who saved the apostles on the water. I did so, and felt composed. There was one circumstance of which I was not aware at the time, but which afterwards interested me when my father named it. Such was the danger to which we were exposed, that the captain himself was violently agitated, and pointing to me, who sate composed and resigned, he said, 'I would give a thousand pounds for the faith of that child.' When I look back," continued Montgomery, "and see myself crossing the water twice at my early age, I seem to have lived two lives;—an antediluvian one before I came to England, and subsequently, a life after the flood."

In the year 1783, the Rev. John Montgomery and his excellent wife, having determined to devote themselves to the work of foreign missions, were appointed to proceed to the West Indies. They therefore brought their two younger children, Robert and Ignatius, to the school at Fulneck, leaving them, along with James, their eldest son, in charge of the Brethren.*

* It may perhaps be proper to mention, in the first place, that "no Brother is ever compelled or even persuaded to go as a missionary among the heathen;" and secondly, that, according to Rule X. in the "General Rules and Regulations of the Missions of the United Brethren," "provision is made for the education of the missionaries' children," &c.

After remaining about three months* with the boys, the devoted Christian couple sailed for Barbadoes, which island they reached in safety—messengers of the Gospel from a land of religious freedom to a community of slave-owners, slave-drivers, and slaves!

* It appears from an old school diary still in existence at Fulneck, and with extracts of which we have been favoured, that the poet's parents remained at the establishment with their children from Sept. 25. to Dec. 2., on which day the Rev. John Montgomery "delivered an address to the children of the school."

CHAP. III.

1777—1779.

FULNECK, ITS ESTABLISHMENT AND SITUATION.— MORAVIAN SEMINARY THERE. — RELIGIOUS SERVICES OF THE BRETHREN. — CHURCH FESTIVALS. — MONTGOMERY AT SCHOOL. — HIS PERSONAL PECULIARITIES AS A BOY.— EARLIEST POETICAL PREDILECTIONS. — BLAIR'S GRAVE. — ROUND POEM. — GENIUS.

FULNECK, so named from a town of Moravia in the circle of Prerau, which had now become the residence of James Montgomery and his two younger brothers, is situated on a pleasant eminence formerly called "Lamb's Hill," in the parish of Calverley, and about six miles south-west of Leeds.* The hamlet or "settlement" was founded by the Moravians about the year 1748, and commands, beyond a richly cultivated valley in front, an extensive prospect; the range of buildings, especially from the south, forming an interesting object to the eye. Conversing on the sub-

* The ground on which the establishment stands was originally let to the Brethren on a very long lease by the Rev. Benjamin Ingham, one of the little band of praying students to whom the name of *Methodists* was first given at Oxford. He married the Lady Margaret Hastings, half-sister to the celebrated Lady Huntingdon. He was a zealous preacher both before and after his expulsion from the pulpits of the Church, forming numerous religious societies, the members of which were generally called *Inghamites*. These ultimately fraternised with the *Moravians*, who were introduced into Yorkshire by Mr. Ingham about 1739 through his intimacy with Count Zinzendorf.

ject—and we are desirous that Montgomery should speak for himself as frequently as possible—"There is," he remarked, "an estate attached to the establishment, divided into three farms—one for the Brethren, another for the Sisters, and a third for the Seminary; the last of which affords a very considerable revenue. It was a piece of rough moorland when entered upon, but it has been highly improved." *Rev. T. Smith*:* "The situation is rather bleak." *Montgomery:* "It is exposed to the east wind, which often comes sweeping up the valley; but it is sheltered from the north." *Everett:* "You are richly recompensed in spring and summer for anything you may suffer from the severity of winter, by its openness to the south." *Montgomery:* "In summer it is delightful; the sun seems to repose on the side of the hill, and in front of the buildings." *Everett:* "The manners of the people in the neighbouring villages are extremely rude." *Montgomery:* "And they were extremely filthy too, which was partly owing to their employment; but still I used to think they might find a fitter place for their nuisances than in front of their doors. We never were (when I was at school) allowed to walk out, unaccompanied by the master; but even with him we were sure to get insulted before we returned, especially when our path lay through Pudsey or Stanningley."

Few situations, perhaps, could have been selected as better adapted for the purpose of a Moravian settlement, than Fulneck. It is in a central part of the kingdom, at a convenient distance from some of the most populous towns and districts in Yorkshire, with which

* The Rev. Thomas Smith, M.A., late Minister of the Nether Chapel, Sheffield, and classical tutor of Masbrough Academy, near Rotherham. He was joint secretary with Mr. Montgomery and Mr. Everett of the Sheffield Lancasterian School for Girls.

it is surrounded, and yet it is sufficiently secluded. The circumstance of the Brethren entering upon it when "it was a piece of rough moorland" is characteristic of their general proceedings, whether we advert to their missions abroad, or their establishments at home; for seldom, if ever, do we find them entering upon another man's labours, and reaping where they have not strown. Through their industry, the desert which was once visible around Fulneck now blossoms like the rose. The air, indeed, is remarkable for its salubrity; and the reputation of the school still stands high. And so far as its popularity has been diminished at all, the result is not due to any decreased exertions on the part of the Brethren, but rather to the opening of seminaries in which parents who are not actually averse to a religious education, may generally place their children under teachers of their own denominations respectively. Montgomery acknowledged a particular providence in his removal to Fulneck:—

"For hither from my native clime,
The hand that leads Orion forth,
And wheels Arcturus round the north,
Brought me in life's exulting prime.
—Blest be that hand! whether it shed
Mercies or judgments on my head;
Extend the sceptre or exalt the rod,
Blest be that hand! it is the hand of God."

Departed Days.

One of the first teachers to whose instructions Montgomery was indebted in Fulneck School, was Job Bradley, a plain, kind Christian man, for whose memory the grateful pupil always entertained, and, in one instance at least recorded, an affectionate remembrance.*

* "On Thursday last, died at Fulneck, Mr. Job Bradley, 46 years teacher of the least class in Fulneck School, in the 76th year

He sometimes read to the children portions of "The Pilgrim's Progress;" nor were the elder scholars themselves interdicted from the perusal of another fascinating book, the earliest favourite of almost every thoughtful lad who is beginning to take an interest in what he reads—"Robinson Crusoe." This ingenious romance was not only perused with avidity, but it produced the natural effect of its influence on sensitive genius in juvenile attempts at imitation. We recollect on one occasion mentioning to Montgomery Miss Porter's imaginary narrative of the "Shipwreck of Sir Edward Seaward," with the remark that she had managed to cast her hero ashore in the company of his wife. "Aye," rejoined the poet, "but she had been anticipated fifty years before by Joe Binns, one of my schoolfellows at Fulneck, who, after reading 'Robinson Crusoe,' wrote a tale of his own, in which he peopled a desert island with the whole crew of a cast-away ship, deriving from them, as I remember he did, not only a new race of people, but a dynasty of sovereigns! I joined with him in the performance; and in describing the territorial divisions of our island we had in view a number of odd-shaped fields which lay on the hill-side opposite the school."

As a rule, however, the reading of works of imagination, whether in prose or verse, was discouraged at that time in Fulneck School. The seminary had essentially a religious character, and it will readily be admitted

of his age. His truly Christian humility and unfeigned piety cause his loss to be lamented by all who knew him; and long will the paternal affection and care of *Brother Bradley*, as his pupils fondly used to call him, be cherished in grateful remembrance by those who have experienced it themselves, or seen it exercised towards their children." — *Iris*, Dec. 11. 1810.

that the constant recurrence of such observances as those to which we have before alluded — a residence in a community where "religion is what law and custom are elsewhere" — where the people "work and play; associate together or dwell apart; go out and come in; rise up and lie down; perform every office of life strictly, or at least avowedly under the sanction of the faith of which they are professors" — that such a concurrence of causes would be likely to have their effect upon the mind of a most sensitively organised boy like Montgomery. But the routine of the school brought him into contact with other still more striking services of a religious character.

A very pleasing and (on the testimony of Montgomery) accurate description of Fulneck, from the pen of a clergyman who had spent some years in the Moravian school there, appeared in the "Metropolitan Magazine" for June, 1845: we quote from it the following graphic passages: —

"I shall not easily forget the boys' sleeping hall, a large room which extended over the whole of the building appropriated to the school, and contained between one and two hundred beds. It was usual for us to meet there on the evening prior to Easter Sunday. A pianoforte was taken for the occasion to one end of this immense room; over it was suspended a lantern, which threw a dim light on a splendid painting of a dead Christ, removed from the Brethren's House. When all had assembled, we stood for a few minutes in front of the picture. Then the full-toned piano, accompanied by a French bugle, broke the silence with one of those airs which for ages have been used in the Moravian Church. This ceased for a moment, and we heard the sweet melody whispering round that vast hall, the whole of which was in darkness, save the spot where we were gathered. Again we mused on the painting, and were almost startled by the breathless quiet of the

place. The music recommenced, and we sang that fine old hymn, —

'Met around the sacred tomb,
Friends of Jesus, why those tears?' &c.

"This was generally followed by an anthem suited to the occasion.

"The next morning found us assembled by five o'clock in the chapel, joined by an immense crowd. The service opened with a voluntary on the organ — the congregation rose — the Rev. C. F. Ramftler entered, followed by the Rev. C. F. Reichel, Rev. Mr. Ray, &c., chanting as they walked, 'THE LORD IS RISEN INDEED!' On reaching their places, the Litany commenced, the responses to which were sung by the choir and congregation. On arriving at the part which refers to the Church triumphant, all adjourned to the burial ground, and there finished the service in the open air.*

"Those only who have witnessed it, can form any notion of its solemnity. The congregation formed a circle, in the centre of which was the officiating clergyman. The sun had just risen, and was lighting up that splendid scenery, and the mists of the night were rapidly rolling away. In the distance covering the opposite hill, were magnificent woods, swept by a clear crystal stream; over us, the birds of the morning carolled their early matins, and then soared into high heaven. It was in such a scene we offered this thrilling petition to heaven's God: —

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* This ancient and solemn service of the primitive Moravian Church, had been — at least out-of-doors — discontinued mostly by the Brethren at Fulneck before Montgomery's introduction to the school, in consequence of the damage done to the grounds, and other disorders arising from the congregation of some thousands of individuals from the neighbourhood. The younger boys listened to these annual commemorations with thrilling delight, while they entertained a hope, which in the poet's case at least was not realised, of long participating in similar solemnities.

"*Minister.*—'And keep us in everlasting fellowship with our brethren—and our sisters—[here mentioning the names of those who had departed since the preceding Easter] who have entered into the joy of their Lord, and whose bodies are buried here; also with the servants and handmaids of our Church, whom thou hast called home within this year; and with the whole Church triumphant; and grant that we may finally rest with them in thy presence from all our labours. Amen.'

"*Congregation.*

'They are at rest in lasting bliss,
Beholding Christ their Saviour;
Our humble expectation is,
To live with Him for ever!'

This verse was sung by the vast assembly, led by horns, trombones, and other wind instruments, and echoed along that beautiful valley, and mingled with the hum of bees, the ripple of the waters, the wild music of the birds, and, it may be, with the minstrelsy of unseen spirits. I have since witnessed the religious ceremonies of other bodies; and although it has been mine to minister at the altar of another Communion, I must confess that I have met with nothing so solemn, yet elegantly chaste, as these services of the Brethren's Church."

"Some persons," said Montgomery, "have run away with the notion that here was prayer for the dead: it is nothing of the kind; but merely a solemn recognition of the union and communion of those who are living and those who have departed in the faith—a declaration that, although death may have severed the relations of earth, the spiritual fellowship of those who are one in Christ remains unbroken."

Of course, as we have already intimated, the rest of those great festivals, which are celebrated by the Church throughout Christendom—Good Friday, Palm Sunday,

Whitsunday, Christmas, &c.—were not neglected at Fulneck. On Christmas eve, for instance, everything was in keeping; the only sound heard in the village was that of the chapel bell, summoning to worship. Every part of the neat yet imposing edifice, with the large chandeliers, &c., had been previously decorated by the Sisters with festoons of evergreens, intermingled with ingenious and beautifully cut devices in paper, &c. The pulpit was similarly adorned. Immediately in front of it, fringed with fir, holly, and various kinds of winter flowers, was a scroll, bearing the inscription "UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN." Precisely at five o'clock, P.M. the organ pealed forth a tide of harmony, the congregation rose, the clergy entered, and the choir performed the Christmas anthem. Tea was then handed round; and children's voices were heard singing that touching melody—

> "Christ the Lord—the Lord most glorious
> Now is born—Oh, shout aloud!" &c.*

It should be added that the Moravians hold a solemn religious service on the last night of the year; it is the antitype of the "Watch night" of the Methodists;—the people in both cases prostrating themselves in silent prayer at the close of the minister's address, a little before, and until the clock strikes twelve: then rising and singing together an appropriate hymn.

It may be mentioned that when young, Montgomery had a very abundant crop of "carotty locks"†; his

* Metropolitan Mag., June, 1845.

† Hugh Montgomery, second Earl of Arundel, appears to have possessed this peculiarity in so striking a degree, that, like his countryman, King William *Rufus*, he received a cognomen from it, being called by the Welsh "Hugh Goch," or *the red-haired.*—Tierney's *Hist. Arundel*, vol. i. p. 154.

constitution early manifested a scorbutic taint of blood, which troubled him a good deal in after life; he had also a common defect of vision, owing to excessive convexity of the pupil of the eye — a circumstance, which, co-operating with morbid sensibilities, was likely enough to throw back upon itself, or into communion with books, the mind of a boy so generally shut out from the excursive and adventurous recreations of his fellow pupils.*

It was the desire of Montgomery's parents to see their son become a minister in the Brethren's church: and on that high office his preceptors had an especial

* To pretend or to admit that a defectiveness of eyesight had any connection with what has been termed "original genius," would be almost as ridiculous as, in our day, is the habit of wearing spectacles by individuals who do not require them. There can, however, be little doubt, but that a decided optical infirmity, by the manner in which it commonly cuts off in a great degree the fresher sources of boyish dissipation and bodily exercise, tends to that early "self-communion," which so often results in a manhood of thoughtfulness, constant, if not deep. Montgomery had a beautiful eye; but owing to the excessive convexity of the lens — a cause either unknown or misunderstood by his parents — his childhood was marked by a visual infirmity, which excluded him from most of the active out-door amusements, as well as scenic gratifications, of his playmates. The myopic character of this defect, for the correction of which he many years afterwards adopted glasses, and continued to wear them to the end of life, was first discovered by him soon after his arrival at Fulneck. While confined in the school room, he presently perceived that a clump of trees on an opposite hill top was clearly defined when looked at through an accidentally concave flaw in the window pane, while the same object seen by the ordinary media appeared an indiscriminate mass. Often did the moody boy amuse himself with this optical discovery, while his school-fellows were engaged at cricket, in which he could not join, or in sliding on the ice — a pleasant juvenile exercise, in which we have heard him say he was wholly unsuccessful

eye in directing his studies. In addition to the Latin, Greek, German, and French languages, he received instruction in History, Geography, and Music. And although his anxiety to distinguish himself among his school-fellows as a poet, soon interfered with the paramount claim of these beneficial pursuits, the advantages of his religious training were even then strongly apparent.

The reader will naturally be curious to know what first led Montgomery to court the Muses. On being interrogated on the subject — "The master," said he, "took several of the children out, one day, and read 'Blair's Grave' to them behind a hedge; my attention was strongly arrested, and a few lines made a powerful impression upon my mind: I said to myself, 'If ever I become a poet, I will write something like this.' I afterwards resolved, oddly enough, that when I became a man, I would write a *round poem:* this notion was perpetually in my head; an idea of *round* being my idea of perfection." This he illustrated by referring to a glass globe, which was smooth and entire; that anything added to it might augment its size, but would never add to the perfection of its rotundity; while anything taken from it might be destructive of its globular form, and so far also of its perfection. When it was once inquired, whether he could attribute to the perusal of any particular author that smoothness of versification which was so predominant a characteristic of his poetry, he still had recourse to the old image, observing, "I wrought it out in my own mind as a pebble is rounded by the stream; I always aimed at it from the beginning. My first idea, as I have before told you, was to write a *round poem:* this was early my *beau idéal* of perfection; and never shall I forget the impression this vague notion made upon my boyish imagination. I remember

as well as if it was but yesterday, how I leaned upon a rail while I stood upon some steps in Fulneck, and deeply and silently mused in my mind, on the commotion which would be produced upon the public by the appearance of this *round poem*."* *Holland:* "What particular part of Blair's poem impressed you most?" *Montgomery:* "The Grave-Digger." *Everett:* "Is it not remarkable that an author so deservedly popular, should have written so little?" *Montgomery:* "There are two or three other pieces of his composition, but of a very inferior character. His 'Grave' is powerful, but somewhat rough." *Holland:* "Were there any other authors who can be said at that time to have inspired you with a love of poetry?" *Montgomery:* "The next poem which I heard read — for I was not permitted to read it myself — was Blackmore's 'Prince Arthur'†: this far surpassed anything I had either heard or imagined; it was read to me some time after I had heard the 'Grave,' and had even attempted the composition of Hymns. There was a rumbling majesty in the lines, which completely captivated my mind, and confirmed the resolution produced by Blair: I resolved I would be a Blackmore." *Everett:* "Sir Richard interested you, then, I suppose, merely for his novelty?" *Montgomery,* plea-

* It might almost be imagined the boy had derived his notion of spherical perfection from a well-known stanza of Dryden's, with which he was, however, unacquainted: —

"How shall I, then, begin, or where conclude,
To draw a fame so truly circular?
For in a round what order can be showed,
Where all the parts so equal perfect are."
On the Death of Cromwell. St. v.

† It is remarkable that the "Christian Poet" does not contain any extract from Blackmore.

santly: "You may say what you will against Sir Richard, but he was a great man." We might mention, among others, Norris of Bemerton's "Crucifixion" and "Garden of Gethsemane," as pieces with which our young poet was at that early period much enamoured.

It is not strange that Montgomery should have retained in after life some portion of filial respect for the poem which seemed to have been the parent of his juvenile resolution. When the "Grave" was long afterwards published, with Blake's splendid illustrations, he became the possessor of a copy; but, as several of the plates were hardly of such a nature as to render the book proper to lie on a parlour table for general inspection, he sold his copy for the subscription price; a circumstance which he often regretted, as the death of the artist soon afterwards rendered the work both scarce and proportionately more valuable. Those persons who have once seen these illustrations will readily recollect the print representing the angel of the "last trump" descending to awake the dead. The celestial messenger is seen in an almost perpendicular position, head downwards, and with his trumpet close to the ear of a corpse which is just beginning to revive,—the bones of the figure are apparently uniting, and the flesh and skin slowly creeping over the skeleton! The solemn absurdity of this conception, and the ingenious manner in which it is executed, afforded Montgomery a very amusing topic of conversation on one occasion when we were present.

While it must be a matter of some interest to know what first inspired a love of poetry in one who cultivated it with life-long success, it is not surprising that the youthful mind of Montgomery should have been sensibly touched on hearing such a poem as the "Grave" read. For where is the person, owing to the universal interest

of the subject, and the striking delineations of character with which the poem abounds, who has passed the tender age of childhood without having been deeply affected by its first perusal? It is not so much, therefore, on account of the impression made, that we distinctly notice the subject, as that we would mark the day on which he heard it as that of his poetical nativity,—the very hedge under whose shade he sat, as the birthplace of his genius. While the other boys were careless of what was read, he appeared literally fixed to the spot.

"At school," as he wrote in 1794, "even when I was driven like a coal ass through the Latin and Greek grammars, I was distinguished for nothing but indolence and melancholy, brought upon me by a raging and lingering fever with which I was suddenly seized one fine summer day, as I lay under a hedge with my companions, listening to our master whilst he read us some animated passages from Blair's Poem on the Grave. My happier school-fellows, born under milder planets, all fell asleep during the rehearsal; but I, who am always asleep when I ought to be waking, never dreamed of closing an eye, but eagerly caught the contagious malady; and from that ecstatic moment to the present, Heaven knows, I have never enjoyed one cheerful, one peaceful night."

We find a somewhat similar accident imparting the first impulse to the poetical instinct of Cowley, who took an early delight in reading Spenser's "Faerie Queen," which lay in the window of his mother's apartment, and which he continued to read, till, by feeling the charms of verse, he became, to use his own phrase, irrecoverably a poet. "Such," observes Dr. Johnson, "are the accidents which, sometimes remembered, and perhaps sometimes forgotten, produce that particular designation of mind, and propensity for some

certain science or employment, which is called genius. The true genius is a mind of large general powers, accidentally determined to some particular direction. Sir Joshua Reynolds, the great painter of the present age, had the first fondness for his art excited by the perusal of Richardson's Treatise."*

* Cowley's Life.

CHAP. IV.

1779—1783.

FIRST ATTEMPTS AT RHYME. — THE OLD MORAVIAN HYMN BOOK. — PROHIBITED AND EXPURGATED BOOKS. — STOLEN PERUSAL OF POETICAL WORKS. — JUVENILE BIRTHDAY VERSES. — HOPEFUL BOYS AT SCHOOL. — SIMPLICITY OF MANNERS THERE. — MONTGOMERY READS EXTRACTS FROM BURNS. — COWPER. — "DEPARTED DAYS." — BOOKS AND CHILDREN. — NOTABLE VISITORS AT FULNECK. — JOHN WESLEY. — DE WATTEVILLE. — LORD MONBODDO. — THE HOLY KISS.

THE first practical effort of Montgomery in rhyme was, naturally enough, in imitation of the hymns with which he was daily familiar, — his chief "poetical preceptor" being the old Moravian choir-book, — doubtless the most curious collection of sacred lyrics in existence. The best apology that can now perhaps be offered for a work at which English taste, and even English orthodoxy, once so strongly revolted*, is that, in the first

* Bishop Lavington, whose dislike seems to have been almost as strong against the Moravians as against the Methodists, reprehended the book in question: as did likewise the Rev. J. Stinstra, a Dutch Anabaptist, if not an Arian (*vide* "Letters of Richardson," v. 245.), and the Rev. John Watson, the Vicar and Historian of Halifax, who addressed, through the press, a letter to the clergy of the Moravian Church, "pointing out several inconsistencies and absurdities in the said Book of Hymns." The mildest censure is that of the celebrated Countess of Huntingdon, who, in a letter to Dr. Doddridge, says: "A Hymn Book is lately published by them (the Moravians), which, to speak as I feel towards them, in love, can be thought of no other way but as the product of the most wild enthusiasts upon the earth."—*Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon*, vol. i. p. 102.

place, it was almost wholly a literal translation from the German; secondly, its offensive peculiarities were, for the most part, confined to style,—the metaphors and not the doctrines being puerile or ludicrous; and lastly, it has long been withdrawn from general use in the Brethren's congregations. There is some weight, too, in the sentiment of Montgomery,—who, by the way, would never lend us *this* book*,—that "other parties did not understand it;" but, be that as it may, there seems something like a phenomenon in the fact of a poet, who started from such a point, becoming the most perfect and polished hymnologist of his age.

As every avenue of approach to the boys, with unauthorised books, was carefully watched at Fulneck, Montgomery's poetical reading lay under considerable restriction. He could not, with Dr. Beattie, congratulate himself by saying:—"Before I was ten years old I was as much master of Homer and Virgil as Pope's and Dryden's translations could make me,"† for, prior to this period, he was prevented from becoming acquainted with any of our more eminent English poets, with the exception of Blair's "Grave," and detached parts

* It was somewhat amusing to see how zealously several correspondents in successive numbers of "Notes and Queries," 1852, quoted and criticised the contents of this collection, many of the hymns in which Montgomery himself might have been proud to have written; especially those by the celebrated Lutheran pastor, Paul Gerhardt, who died at Lübben in Saxony, in 1676. His "Devotional Songs," one hundred and twenty in number, "have ever been highly valued by the Church of Christ, and doubtless will continue to be so, so long as German tongues are employed to celebrate the praises of redeeming love." This testimony is from Mrs. Carr's translation of Pastor Wildenhahn's "Paul Gerhardt, an Historical Tale of the Lutherans and Reformers in Brandenburg, under the Great Elector," 2 vols. 1847.

† Forbes's Life of Beattie, vol. i. p. 207.

of Blackmore's "Prince Arthur," as already noticed. He related an anecdote to one of the biographers, which, though it has already appeared in print, may be appropriately noticed here, to show the vigilant care of his instructors. The father of one of the boys sent to the school a volume of selections, chiefly from Milton, Thomson, and Young; consisting, as he supposed, of some of their finest moral and religious sentiments. The book, however, was carefully examined by one of the masters, and pruned of its unprofitable passages. On its being presented to the boy, he had the mortification to find it seriously mutilated, many leaves cut out, and others in a mangled state!

This solicitude of the Christian teachers of Fulneck, though in itself highly commendable, has been charged with producing, in some degree, the effects intended to be avoided by it. It was, however, much more efficient than some similar plans that have been projected and pursued elsewhere. We have seen theories put forth for striking from the Bible itself passages which it is alleged are improper to be submitted to the indiscriminate perusal of children. In such a case, we should be the last to regret that the prohibition or omission of certain parts should lead to a perusal of the whole; for it will generally be found, that, to allow even children to dig for the ore of truth in its own native bed, is on the whole the best; experience proving that God, who stands by his own word, will never suffer it to be read in vain, especially under judicious religious tutors. The Israelites were commanded to teach their children diligently "*all the words*" of the Law; and to "*Search the Scriptures*" is a duty as imperative and binding upon young persons as upon those of riper years. In reference to uninspired productions, caution is certainly requisite,—not the caution observed in the

memorable edition of the Westminster Classics, in which the objectionable sentences are weeded from the pages, and placed by themselves at the conclusion of the volume! a plan which has naturally caused more vigorous and curious translations to be attempted of the interdicted passages than if they had either been omitted altogether or suffered to remain in the body of the works from which, with doubtless the best intentions, they had been separated.* A little incident may here be mentioned, as showing that Montgomery himself was far from relinquishing the general principles of caution. While one of the biographers was once sitting with him by the fire, in the shop of the Misses Gales, in Sheffield, a little boy entered, about the height of the counter, and inquired,—"Have you a sixpenny play-book, called Jane Shore?" Montgomery

* Perhaps some persons may think the perusal of the poems of Burns, Blackwood's Magazine, Mrs. Radcliffe's "Mysteries of Udolpho," and Scott's Novels, in which the boys were afterwards allowed to indulge, a larger stride in the direction of the spirit of the age than might have been expected, in Fulneck school, to have characterised even a transition from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century. The readings and the music of the later period, are thus enthusiastically referred to by an old pupil:—"I have known the boys fling aside their books during 'preparation hour,' to listen while Thomson [a son of the late Dr. Thomson of Edinburgh] practised on the piano. One afternoon in class, Mr. Fredlizius had given us, instead of the 'English Reader,' a volume of Scott's 'Old Mortality.' The part selected was that which describes the journey of old Mause, Cuddie, and the Rev. Gabriel Kettledrummie, with the battle and death scene of Claverhouse. The effect of this narrative was only equalled by the music of the evening, when our young associate worked us up to pure enthusiasm. I was not wrong when I settled it in my own mind that John Thomson was destined for eminence. He afterwards filled the professor's chair in the University of Edinburgh." — *Metropolitan Mag.*, June, 1845, p. 195.

started up in an apparently angry mood, saying,— "You little fellow, why do you want that book? Such things are not fit for you to read; go instantly about your business." The boy made a quick retreat; and as Montgomery returned, after having shut the door, he observed, smiling, "Who knows but that is a young Roscius? One of the first things that gave me a desire to read such books, was an extract from 'Hamlet,' in Enfield's 'Speaker,' which I read when at school. We were of course prohibited from reading the entire play, and that very prohibition, with a recollection of the extract, created in me the most ardent desire to see the whole; nor did I ever rest till I had read it." His conduct to the boy evinces, that, whatever might have been the effect of the prohibition on his own juvenile mind, in riper years he saw its propriety; nor was there ever a more faithful guardian, as far as his influence extended, of the principles and morals of youth.

How strictly the system of surveillance at school was carried out—in Montgomery's case at least—we learn from himself, in a confidential letter to a friend, written in early life. Speaking of his ten years' residence at Fulneck, he says:—"During the whole of this long period, I was as carefully secluded, in common with all my school-fellows, from any commerce with the world, as if we had been imprisoned in a cloister. I do not recollect having once, during all that time, conversed for ten minutes with any person whatever, except my companions, our masters, or occasional Moravian visitors!" Referring to the motives and influences of piety in connection with the same time and place, he remarks:— "Whatever we did was done for the sake and in the name of Jesus Christ, . . . whom we were taught to regard in the amiable and endearing light of a friend and bro-

ther."* And then comes the following touching and significant testimony to the effect of this early Moravian discipline:—"There is no system of religion, which I have yet seen, which, taking it all in all, has half the charms for a young, a warm, and a feeling heart, as that professed by these people. I *once* believed; I *once* enjoyed its blessings; I once was happy! But I was troubled from my infancy with that most inveterate of distempers, the *cacoethes scribendi*. The hymns of the Moravians are full of ardent expressions, tender complaints, and animated prayers: these were my delight. As soon as I could write and spell, I imitated them; and before I was thirteen, I had filled a little volume with sacred poems, though I was almost entirely unacquainted with our great English poets." And then follows the account of the volume of poetry, pruned of its unprofitable passages. "But," adds the poet, "notwithstanding all this care, I frequently found means to borrow books, and read by stealth. But all mankind are made of the same clay: my curiosity was insatiate; and the pains that were taken to conceal certain things from us made us more eager to explore them." These stolen waters of knowledge were sweet—sweet in the mouth, but bitter in the belly; for he goes on:—"Religion itself, at length, was brought before the court of inqui-

* The peculiarity alleged in the text was early and permanently apparent in Count Zinzendorf. "Sometimes," says his biographer, Spangenberg, speaking of his boyhood, "when he had pen, ink, and paper, he wrote a little note to his Saviour; told him in it how his heart felt towards him, and threw it out of the window, in the hopes that he would find it." On the same authority we are told that on one occasion, when travelling on his religious mission along with a companion, he sent the latter back to Herrnhut, "in order that he might converse the more unreservedly with his Saviour, with whom he was wont to speak, when alone, as if he were personally with him."

sition in my own heart: I studied, I reasoned, I doubted, I almost disbelieved what I had hitherto adhered to on the credit of my tutors; simplicity once lost can never be regained:" and it was the life-long lamentation of the poet that he had once *so* lost it!

It ought to be observed that although the preceptors of Fulneck school were aware how easily the heart is entered and the affections seduced by the avenues of the imagination, and therefore interdicted the reading of some of the higher, and consequently more fascinating productions of the British poets, it does not appear that the composition of verses was restrained, but rather encouraged. On the birthday of any favourite scholar, it was usual for his school-fellows, with whom, however, the task was perfectly optional, to present him with some poetical tribute; which, after being perused by the master, was read before the bishop, who "improved the occasion" to the moral and spiritual advantage of the boys. Young Montgomery was among the tributary bards on one of these occasions: but being, as he observed, too listless to perform his task, and knowing that another boy had a good stock of verses in his folio, our tyro bargained with him for a copy, selecting what he judged the best. It was given in with the others to the master for examination, when it turned out there was one exactly similar to it, which another boy, as idle as himself, had procured in the same way! This led to an explanation which mortified Montgomery exceedingly; and he immediately retired and produced a composition which was deemed superior to any of the others that were presented.

As a sample of these *Juvenilia*, we transcribe the following from the tributes offered to Montgomery on his own birthday, Nov. 4th, 1786: like those of the preceding and following years, they have no merit beyond the evidence they afford of an affectionate

feeling on the part of the boys towards each other. The first and last are from his brothers:—

"O, dearest Lord! to him be near,
And bless him daily through this year;
Yea, let his heart besprinkled be,
Each day and hour, with love from Thee.

"O, bless my dearest brother so,
That he with gratitude may glow,
And give his heart, as some reward,
For all thy sufferings, dearest Lord.

ROBERT MONTGOMERY."

"My dear Saviour, let him be
Thy own blood-bought property:
O, grant him a happy heart—
Let him never from Thee part.

"Dearest Saviour, grant him peace;
Let thy love to him ne'er cease:
O, let him enjoy Thee ever—
His kind Lord, and gracious Saviour.

JOHN ANGELL."

"O beloved Saviour, dear!
Grant to him a happy year;
Let him be in love with Thee
Unto all eternity.

"May his heart be quite resigned
To thy holy will and mind:
May he ever thine remain,
Till to heaven he attain.

"Every hour, and everywhere,
Be Thou to his heart quite near;
Let him feel thy precious peace,
Throughout all his future days.

"From your loving brother,
"IGNATIUS MONTGOMERY."

There are at least a dozen more sets of verses in the batch, exhibiting, respectively, neither more poetry nor less piety than the foregoing. It is gratifying to perceive how the "threefold cord" of fraternal affection, which was "not broken" except by the stroke of death, bound together the boys who were left by their parents as orphans, "for Christ's sake," in this religious seminary.

On being asked whether any of the boys educated with him became distinguished for their talents, particularly as poets, — *Montgomery:* "No; there was one boy I used to envy exceedingly for his ability in composing verses. I would at that time have given anything to have been able to write like Billy Dutton; he was the envy of the whole school for this talent." *Everett:* "Is he living?" (1822.) *Montgomery:* "No, poor fellow; he died long since." *Holland:* "'*The celebrated* Richard Hatt,' as he calls himself, has printed a fragment of a poem on the *Law*, which was written by a Peter Collis, who is said to have been your schoolfellow." *Montgomery:* "Yes; Peter was a clever lad, and was remarkable for his keen memory; but he was much younger than I; and was with my brothers in another room."

Another birthday anecdote may be mentioned, as showing the simple piety of the children.

It was customary for the boys of different classes to take tea with each other. Montgomery was then in his ninth year, and was placed with boys of his own age and attainments. One day the beverage was changed; and when the boys had all partaken, they formed a circle hand in hand, and sung a hymn. One of the least was then placed in the centre of the ring, to officiate in prayer. He knelt down, and said, "O

Lord, bless us little children, and make us very good. We thank thee for what we have received. O bless this good chocolate to us, and give us more of it!" "When he came to the closing sentence," said Montgomery, "we could scarcely maintain our seriousness, though it was the natural expression of every one of our hearts."

His attachment to verse increased; and by secretly borrowing and reading books by stealth he contrived incessantly to add to his stock of poetical ideas. Such was the facility with which he versified, that, before he had attained the tenth year of his age, he had filled a little volume with his own compositions. These mostly bore the stamp of seriousness, and were, in style, construction, and sentiment, similar to the Moravian hymns which he was in the daily habit of either reading, singing, or hearing "given out" in the devotional exercises of the Brethren.

Opportunities of getting a sight of poetry of a higher order were now sometimes caught. Montgomery and some of the other boys even contrived to obtain an occasional, but always furtive glance at two or three of the little poems of Burns, which had found their way, from the first volume published by the Scottish bard, into a newspaper received by one of the Fulneck teachers. Before he left school he read the two volumes of Cowper's, then recently published; and this, he said, was the first "whole poet" he had seen. And what other poet was there whose works, *as a whole*, could be said to be so unexceptionable? It is somewhat remarkable, however, that Montgomery, who lived to appreciate with such critical sagacity the beauties of the bard of Olney, — to assign his position in the van of that striking poetical cohort which presently characterised our literature, and who, doubt-

less, beyond any other individual, ultimately sympathised with the piety as well as the genius of his predecessor, did not, at the period in question, much relish his works! The style was, in fact, too pure and simple: "I thought," said he, "I could write better verses myself."

To the character of his early love for poetry, he refers in a spirit-stirring rhapsody on "Departed Days," part of which has been already cited. How gracefully he blends with the recollections of his boyish lays a description of his pursuits and feelings! —

"Here, while I roved, a heedless boy,
Here, while through paths of peace I ran,
My feet were vexed with puny snares,
My bosom stung with insect cares:
But ah! what light and little things
Are childhood's woes! — they break no rest!
Like dew-drops on the sky-lark's wings,
While slumbering on his grassy nest,
Gone in a moment, when he springs
To meet the morn with open breast,
As o'er the eastern hills her banners glow,
And, veiled in mist, the valley sleeps below.

"Like him, on these delightful plains,
I taught, with fearless voice,
The echoing woods to sound my strains,
The mountains to rejoice.
Hail! to the trees beneath whose shade,
Rapt into worlds unseen, I strayed;
Hail! to the stream that purled along
In hoarse accordance to my song, —
My song, that poured uncensured lays
Tuned to a dying Saviour's praise,
In numbers simple, wild, and sweet,
As were the flowers beneath my feet; —

Those flowers are dead,
Those numbers fled,
Yet o'er my secret thought,
From cold oblivion's silent gloom
Their music to mine ear is brought,
Like voices from the tomb."

These lines were written in the spring of 1806, on visiting Fulneck, when few things imparted greater pleasure than a recollection of the innocence of his childhood and the devotional character of his muse; for, as he continues to sing,—

"As yet, in this untainted breast,
No baleful passion burned,
Ambition had not banished rest,
Nor hope had earthward turned;
Proud Reason still in shadow lay,
And in my firmament alone,
Forerunner of the day,
The dazzling star of wonder shone,
By whose enchanting ray
Creation opened on my earliest view,
And all was beautiful, for all was new."

Speaking of this period of life, when "Proud Reason still in shadow lay," he once made a remark in our hearing, which may here be appropriately introduced. At a meeting of the friends and teachers of an institution for the religious education of children, at which one of the biographers presided, a note was handed to Montgomery by the chairman, requesting him to make a few observations on a passage in the Report which had been read, to the effect, that in the library of the school there were several books unfit for the children to read, as being above their capacity. After several other judicious remarks, he said he did not altogether object

to books of the description complained of; for they ought not always to be *brought down* to a level with the capacities of children; their understandings were rather to be *brought up* to the meaning of the works by the teachers labouring to make them acquainted with their contents. Every school book must always be in one sense above the capacity of the learner, otherwise instruction would be unnecessary. He recollected different books being put into his hands while a boy at school, which, though he had not at the time understanding to comprehend them, he had industry to read, and a memory to retain their contents. These became materials for thinking in after life; the subjects were received into the memory as the stomach receives food. From thence they were taken up into the understanding. There, properly digested, they afforded suitable intellectual nourishment. This, in its turn, influenced the *heart;* and if he had not become both wiser and better for all that he had read in his life, the fault was not in the books, but in himself.

The boys were occasionally indulged with a walk, accompanied by their teachers, to Kirkstall Abbey, the fine ruins of which, as well as the ground upon which they stood, were at that time wholly untrimmed by the hand of art. Of one of these juvenile excursions, as reviewed in later years, we find the following memento among the poet's fragments in rhyme:—

"Ye ruins green and gray,
More glorious in decay,
Than in your prime,
How do your piles display
The powers of Nature, Man, and Time!

"He the proud structure planned;
Reared it, and bade it stand,
While Time and Nature should endure;

Then laid him down and died,
And, in the folly of his pride,
Deemed the temple and his shrine secure!

"Time viewed the noble monument;
Its stately bulwarks rent,
Broke down its towers, and spread
Their fragments o'er the builder's head;
Then, with his progeny of years,
Each moment, faithful to its trust,
Touched down their glory into dust.
Nature beheld, and shed sweet tears,
And bade the lichen and the moss
The standing stone, the fallen emboss;
Dew, rain, snow, sleet and hail,
And sun and breeze, and clouds and storms,
Through ages nurtured in the vale
Flowers of all colours, scents, and forms,
Running through thick and waving grass,
And among every clustered mass;
While on each undecaying wall
She trained with delicatest care
The ivy in luxuriant folds to crawl,
And hang in wreaths amid the air;
Around the lanthorn spires to creep,
And through the unlatticed windows sweep,
The haunt of midnight owls. . . .
Trees from the verdant floor,
Amidst the roofless aisles take root,
And lift th' uplooking eye
Through their green branches to the sky." . . .

"At *Esholt Hall*, near *Woodhouse Grove*," says he, in a note before us, "I remember, as a boy, a stately figure of *Diana*, that 'Queen and Huntress, chaste and fair,' equipped for giving no quarter to 'the flying hart,' as Ben Jonson calls that notorious deer-stalker, in one of his beautiful songs. There was also a smaller, full-

length *lady undrest* in a bower, all gilt and glittering, '*aurea Venus*' no doubt, which we naughty boys were not permitted to approach too curiously."

Another place which the boys occasionally visited on holidays was Bierley Park, about three miles from Fulneck, and formerly the residence of Dr. Richard Richardson*, whose "Correspondence" with the eminent botanists of his day was printed for private circulation by Miss Currer, of Ecton Hall, in 1835. Montgomery remembered noticing the uncommon flowers that had survived the era of their original introduction and culture; and especially the fine old cedar, of which there is a print in the book above mentioned.

How easily and how vividly these juvenile rambles were recalled to the poet's mind late in life will be seen from the following extract of a letter addressed by him to the Rev. J. A. Latrobe, of Kendal, in 1850:— "This morning I have taken up the 'Lays' again, and may add, summarily, that the 'Roman Coliseum' and 'Kirkstall Abbey' are truly picturesque, as well as poetical. The latter made me young again; and the spirit of many romantic days, not dead but sleeping, came upon me in the twilight of my old age (having just closed my *threescore-and-nineteenth year* on the 4th of this month); they came upon me, I say, in that beauty of ideality, which is the poetry of prose reali-

* An indiscretion attributed to this gentleman by local rumour, or more probably to his son, Montgomery has transferred to his character of Sir Solomon Sombre in the "Whisperer:" "During the rebellion in the last reign, in a large circle of his jovial companions, the intoxicated baronet toasted the unfortunate Chevalier de St. George, who was at that time on his march toward the capital. Though the toast was evidently given only in a frolic, it had nearly cost him his life—he was committed to Newgate upon suspicion of high treason," &c.—No. LV. June 18, 1745.

ties, disembodied and sainted by the remembrance that such things were, — and were to us most dear and precious. An old Fulneck scholar visited me a few days ago, and, your book lying before me, I read that passage, and we spent 'a holiday afternoon' in a trance of recollecting that crowded into fifteen minutes the spoils of memory gathered in youth, and hoarded like the miser's treasure, to be often visited, 'counted and recounted,' amidst all the changes of dying life."

The sameness of the ordinary school scenes at Fulneck was occasionally relieved by the presence of interesting visitors, either Brethren from a distance, or strangers attracted by the peculiarity of the establishment. Although Montgomery did not recollect ever to have seen the Rev. John Wesley, it appears from the Journal of the latter, that he visited Fulneck, and was shown by Mr. Moore entirely through the establishment, *with the exception of the schools*, in April, 1780, which was during Montgomery's residence there; but, as he afterwards remarked, the name of Mr. Wesley was an unwelcome one among the boys, on account of what he had said about the Moravians in his writings. In recording the present visit, he says, after describing the social arrangements of the Brethren :— "I see not what but the mighty power of God can hinder them from acquiring millions; but can they lay up treasure on earth, and at the same time lay up treasure in heaven?" We believe they did the latter, but certainly not the former.

We have heard Montgomery allude with pleasure to his recollection of the visits of the Moravian Bishop Watteville to the school at Fulneck. Johannes de Watteville * was son-in-law to Count Zinzendorf, hav-

* Not far from the Pont de Thiele, about five miles from Neufchâtel, on the route towards Berne, lies the Chateau of Montmirail,

ing married that nobleman's eldest daughter, Henrietta-Benigna-Justina. When these important personages visited the school, "Brother Johannes" addressed the boys*, and "Sister Benigna" the girls: after which the good bishop, whom our poet described as a large and most venerable man, with a lofty, curled wig, kissed the boys on both cheeks, his wife saluting the girls: all the boys, however, likewise kissed her hand.† Continental habits rendered the primitive ceremony of the "holy kiss" somewhat general among the early Moravians, even in England: and we recollect one instance in which Montgomery, many years after his settlement in Sheffield, was rather unexpectedly saluted after this ancient fashion, by two of the Brethren from abroad, who called upon him.

There were in the school a number of children, from different parts of the United Kingdom, but young Montgomery was the only boy in his room from beyond the Tweed. This circumstance to some of his school-fellows was a source of mirth and ridicule; and, with "his *tongue*, at least," according to an expression of his own, he had "to fight the battles of his country, against every reproach that could be cast upon it in his pre-

formerly the property of a branch of the noble family of *De Watteville*. It has since been transferred to the Church of the United Brethren, who have here a large and flourishing establishment for the education of females."—Latrobe's *Alpenstock*, p. 193.

* A striking exemplification of the effects of the addresses of this individual to the boys of Fulneck School, about twenty years before Montgomery's time, occurs in Rondthaler's "Life of the Moravian Missionary, Heckewelder," p. 30., edit. Philadelphia, 1847.

† The children had another reason for the pleasure with which they anticipated a visit from these worthy Germans, besides the counsel and the kisses;—they did not fail to bring with them a treat of raisins, or some other sweets.

sence." His patriotic attachment was strongly confirmed, probably about this period, by a little incident, which made an indelible impression on his mind, and which he noticed, many years afterwards, at a public dinner in commemoration of the birthday of Burns. The late learned and venerable but eccentric Lord Monboddo, on visiting Fulneck, was introduced by the Moravian bishop to the seminary, and the names of several of the boys were told over to him. To these the old judge seemed to pay but little attention, till the good bishop said, "Here, my lord, is one of your countrymen;" at which he started, as from a brown study, and, brandishing a large horsewhip over Montgomery's head, cried out, "I hope he will take care that his country shall never be ashamed of him." "This," said the poet, "I never forgot; nor shall I forget it while I live: I have, indeed, endeavoured so to act hitherto, that my country might never have cause to be ashamed of me,—nor will I, on my part, ever be ashamed of her."*

* There is no truth in a statement which has appeared in print to the effect that his lordship presented to the boy a copy of the poems of Burns.

CHAP. V.

1783—1788.

OCCASIONAL CONTACT OF THE PUPILS IN FULNECK SCHOOL WITH POLITICAL NEWS.—APPREHENSION OF A VISIT FROM RIOTERS AT THE ESTABLISHMENT.—MONTGOMERY'S ODE TO SOLITUDE.—OTHER PROJECTED AND ATTEMPTED JUVENILE POEMS.—THE WORLD.—ALFRED.—POEMS ON THE LAST JUDGMENT.—ENGLISH HEXAMETERS.—CASTLE OF IGNORANCE.—NATIVE GENIUS AND EDUCATION.—MONTGOMERY'S INVINCIBLE ATTACHMENT TO POETICAL PURSUITS.—THE BRETHREN GIVE UP THE HOPE OF EDUCATING HIM AS A MINISTER.—MOLTHER, THE MORAVIAN.—MONTGOMERY PLACED IN A RETAIL SHOP AT MIRFIELD.—HIS FONDNESS FOR MUSIC.

NOTWITHSTANDING the anxious and jealous care of the guardians of the school at Fulneck to keep the boys intact from the world without, the religious routine of the establishment was occasionally exposed to other than poetic, or even pacific interferences. The belligerent spirit, at that time so rife in America, as well as in Europe, found, indeed, no distinct echo in the peaceful seclusion; but the battle of Bunker's Hill, the war in Germany, and the riots of Lord George Gordon in London, were events which forced themselves into the conversations of the pupils as well as of the teachers. The Gordon riots became a specific cause of real terror: for, as it was very easy—not to say natural—for an ignorant and fanatic rabble to believe or pretend that the Moravians were, if not actually papists, yet popishly inclined, a mob-visitation was, for some days in the spring of 1780, hourly expected at the settlement, where various modes of flight and concealment were discussed and contemplated. Happily, the threatened

mischief did not occur; and when it was remarked to Montgomery, that, at any rate, the insurgents would not have found any symbols of superstition *there*, he replied, "No; unless they had regarded and denounced as such a large picture of the Entombment of Christ, in the dormitory of the single Brethren." This was from the pencil of an old member of the Moravian fraternity, named Brandt, who not only repeated the subject for other places, but painted a series of pictures illustrative of striking events in the early history of the Church of the United Brethren. At a later period Montgomery heard more about martial movements. One of the teachers was a native of Prussia, and from him the boys first heard of the name of Maria Theresa, the sufferings of Baron Trenck, and the death of Frederick the Great in 1786.

The little bickerings of the sensitive Scottish boy with his schoolfellows, which seldom amounted to any thing serious, had no tendency to impede the progress of his mind in one direction at least. To the little volume which he filled with effusions in verse prior to the tenth year of his age, he added, before he completed his twelfth, two more, which were equally filled. The best of these schoolboy productions have been justly considered as, on the whole, more remarkable for boldness of conception than felicity of expression. The following is a specimen:—

Night Scene, from an Ode to Solitude.

"Let me wander slow, and rove,
Through the solitary grove;
Universal silence reigns,
Save where Philomel complains,
And the turtle for the fate
Of his lately murdered mate.

But hark! what lamentable sound
Echoes through the groves around?
Sailing through the fluttering air
The wailing owls the woodlands scare.
While thus musing on I stroll,
Flaming constellations roll
Quick towards the midnight goal.
Lost in mists obscurely dim,
The shadowy landscape seems to swim.
Cynthia, sister of old Night,
Gilds his sullen brow with light;
Oft her modest face she shrouds
In a veil of silvery clouds,
Bursting forth with brighter beams,
As if washed in their white streams;
Rides majestic o'er the sky,
While the clouds around her fly.
This is thy nocturnal dress,
Solitude! sweet shepherdess."

Such was his fondness for poetical composition before he left school, that he frequently retired to rest with a subject on his mind, the completion of which he resolved to effect before he closed his eyes in sleep. "This wakefulness," said he, "became a habit, which, in after life, never wholly forsook me."

The inventive powers of the young bard were ever in active operation; and, imagining himself adequate to produce something superior to merely lyrical compositions, he plumed his wings for a higher flight; and, hovering in delight over poetic ground, he at length perceived a subject which forcibly struck him, —seized upon it with the avidity with which the descending eagle rushes on her prey, and bore it away to the solitude of his study. What occupied his mind and his pen, in this instance, was a mock-heroic poem, in imitation of Homer's Frogs and Mice! This he

composed before he was fourteen years old, in three books, which contained more than a thousand lines. Other heroic poems were planned and begun by him; but they were generally discarded for newly presented and more attractive subjects.

Having been taught select portions of Virgil, he began an eclogue, in imitation of that poet, before he had attained his eleventh year. Another school poem, which he commenced at a somewhat later period, and which he retouched even after his settlement at Sheffield, was entitled "The World," and was intended to comprise an epitome of moral, religious, and civil history! On our once remarking to him that he had taken an extensive range, "O yes," said he, smiling, "*Commencer au commencement*—I began with the beginning—with man in Paradise." *Holland:* "Had you read 'Paradise Lost,' when you conceived the idea of your poem?" *Montgomery:* "I had only seen some extracts from it; but I intended to outdo Milton! I meant, as I said, to begin at the beginning, or, rather, earlier still; for my plan contemplated a representation of the Almighty, happy, and alone in the solitude of eternity. I then conceived that the thought (to speak humanly) should arise in the Divine Mind, that He would create other beings to participate in his glory; and that, immediately on the exercise of infinite volition, angels were to come into being. I meant to describe the battle between Michael and his angels, and Satan and his legions; and, at last, to engage these hierarchs themselves in single combat to decide the issue of the strife; but, as they were both immortal, I was somewhat at a loss how the arch-fiend was to be vanquished. At length I hit upon what I thought a happy expedient; during the encounter, when Satan assumed an unguarded position, Michael was to smite

off one of his wings, and he was to tumble down into the abyss of darkness! I well remember how I chuckled over the idea of this notable feat."

The period at length arrived — "sweet fifteen!" — when, in the course of his historical reading, he found a theme for song from which, after the commendation he had received already, he expected to reap a harvest of praise — the subject was the wars of "ALFRED THE GREAT." Alfred has engaged the thoughts of many a nestling, and not a few veteran poets. Blackmore and Pye are generally shelved — Cottle will occasionally be read.

There are two other names associated with poetical celebrations of the Anglo-Saxon hero — Sadler and Fitchett.* "After all that has been said and done," said Montgomery, late in life, "Alfred is a fine subject for an epic in every respect. The character of the king is one in which every Englishman feels an interest. The leading events of his life, at the most remarkable and heroic period of it more especially, fall within a sufficiently brief period of time for concentrated poetic action; while the institutions which he founded or consolidated, may be said not only to have long survived him in their existence and influence, but to mould at least in some degree our municipal usages at the present moment. I had myself brilliant thoughts and schemes about Alfred, when very young, and I still think the subject an available one for a poet." On the topic being recalled by a passage in the Life of M. T. Sadler, Esq., published in 1842, Montgomery adverted to a report, once current, to the effect that Sadler had actually received an offer of 2000 guineas for his poem of

* Fitchett's "Life of King Alfred, a Poem," edited by Roscoe, 6 vols. 8vo., published at 3*l.* 3*s.*

"Alfred;" the rumour, however, appeared to rest on no solid foundation. Montgomery added, that on one occasion, when Humphrey Sandwith drove him out in a gig from Burlington to Flamborough, he beguiled several miles of the way by reciting scores of lines from Sadler's poem, which was written in imitation of the style of Pope's version of Homer.

The rhyming attempts already mentioned were mostly in the common heroic measure; but our young poet now determined to quit the beaten track, and pursue a course of his own. His "Alfred" was to consist of a series of Pindaric odes, in which the story was to be developed; the youthful poet conceiving it possible to unite the orderly sublimity and magnificence of the epic with the glowing enthusiasm exhibited in the two grand odes of Dryden.

"This," says the writer of a memoir in the New Monthly Magazine, "was truly boyish daring; but it was the daring of a boy of genius. The first scintillations of genius are valuable to those best able to estimate the gem, when it has attained the polish of experience; and even the still-born progeny of such an intellect as that of Montgomery, which were conceived before his strength was able to bring them to maturity, must be interesting. To prove that they were so, the writer of this brief memoir feels happy in recollecting what he was once told, on undoubted authority, was the subject of the first and second odes of the contemplated poem already mentioned. It commenced whilst Alfred was in the Isle of Athelney, disguised as a peasant, and the first ode opened with a description of the Almighty seated upon his throne, looking down and commiserating the ruins of England, when a host of the spirits of Englishmen, who had just perished in a battle with the Danes, appeared in his presence to receive their

eternal doom! These spirits described the state of their country, and implored the Sovereign of the Universe to interpose and deliver it from despotism. Such was the opening of the juvenile epic! It was a fearless flight! And though it fell abortive, the boldness of the conception must have convinced the conductors of Fulneck Academy, that their pupil was of no common fashion." The foregoing description is from the words of Montgomery, in a letter to a friend; and is, with the MS. of the poem itself, now before us: the latter exhibits only two books of odes, out of the twenty originally contemplated.

The following conversation, which refers to his poetry and his opinions at this juvenile period, will further illustrate the bent and assiduity of his mind, which was secretly but intensely revolving, in its own little sphere, various magnificent projects, to the detriment of the more important but less attractive circle of his school employments. Indeed, he was himself not unconscious of this; for while this boyish ambition of fame was growing within him, his susceptible heart was often perplexed and pierced with the meaning of two or three sentences in the Litany affixed to the Hymn Book, which he had hitherto read with a child-like simplicity so suitable to its character: — "Keep us, our dear Lord and God — from untimely projects — from all loss of our glory in Thee — from unhappily becoming great."

Rev. Thomas Smith: "Is there any good poem on the General Judgment?" *Everett:* "There is Young's 'Last Day.'" *Montgomery:* "And there are many fine passages in it; but the subject, on the whole, is hardly suitable for poetry: it affords one solid and awful thought, to which you seem to feel incapable of adding anything; and by merely expanding what is

revealed, by adding imaginary details, you lessen its dignity and impair its effect. Though often touched upon by poets, the theme can seldom be pursued at length, without insuring failure. There is a single passage in the 'Night Thoughts,' on this subject, where Young is more striking than in his 'Last Day,'—

"'Amazing period! when each mountain-height
Outburns Vesuvius; rocks eternal pour
Their melted mass, as rivers once they pour'd:
Stars rush, and final Ruin fiercely drives
Her ploughshare o'er Creation.'—*Night Thoughts*, B. ix.

"Indeed," he added, "it is inimitable. I recollect myself writing an 'Ode on the General Judgment,' which I have yet by me. It was a juvenile essay; for the subject is one on which young poets are often tempted to exercise their skill—or prove their want of it." *Everett:* "Was it ever printed?" *Montgomery:* "No; I wrote it at school before I was sixteen, and when I was so full of poetry." *Smith:* "Have you seen Southey's 'Vision of Judgment,' in English hexameters?" *Montgomery:* "Yes." *Smith:* "How has he succeeded?" *Montgomery:* "Much as I suppose any man of classical taste and metrical skill would have done, even had the subject itself been less obviously unpropitious. The fact is, it seems impossible for any one, strictly speaking, to succeed in such an attempt, if by success be meant to give pleasure to general readers. Of course, hexameter verses may be constructed in English: I began a poem in that style myself when about seventeen years of age." *Everett:* "What was the subject, Sir?" *Montgomery:* "Oh, it was the 'Castle of Ignorance;' its hero Rinaldo; and its plan the progress of the human mind, and the development of genius, operating upon the life of man, in conduct

morals, and happiness, through a variety of modifications. I composed about one hundred and fifty verses; but found the English language—or at least, my command of it—to be incapable of successful adaptation to the ancient metre." *Holland:* "I have often wondered that any person, having an ear for the modulations of English verse, should think of constructing lines in it according to the hexameter scale." *Montgomery:* "I do not wonder at it. One can scarcely read the original text of Homer and Virgil, and enter into the spirit of the composition, without believing it possible to produce something of similar effect in our language. My poem commenced thus:—

"'Wars and adventures I sing, of knights, whose renownëd achievements
Vanquished the mighty hosts of wild Superstition and Ignorance,
And with a conquering arm and courage undaunted, broke open
The seven-fold portals of brass that led to the castle's recesses,
Where in deep dungeons the Arts were fettered in chains adamantine,
Bound to the floor,' &c.

"Now, you will perceive, it is hardly possible for any one to read these few lines without the proper accentuation, whether acquainted with the Latin quantities or not: but it would be far otherwise in a poem of any considerable length."

The smile excited by this discovery of the nestling poet, as to the inadaptability of his native tongue for hexameter verse, with which he daringly attempted to plume his genius in this early essay, will most likely be succeeded by an expression of surprise, that any boy should have thought of composing in a

metre apparently so foreign to the genius of English versification, and of which we hardly see how he could have met with a single example in his reading. Much less was he likely, at this age, to have imbued his mind with that knowledge of, and taste for, the ancient metres, which is generally consequent upon having long studied and deeply relished the peculiar beauties of the classical poets in the originals. That Southey should have failed, where no one else had completely succeeded, is less strange, than that he should have hazarded an attempt in a style — to say nothing of the subject — where comparative success, from all that we have seen, was not worth attaining; and it was thought, at the time, that whatever merit belonged to the experiment, it was dearly purchased at the price of having only done *better* than others, what nobody ever did, or perhaps ever will do *well*. Dr. Johnson's remark, that "blank verse is only poetry to the eye," appears far more applicable to what are termed "English hexameters;" the latter being very liable to be read by the uninitiated as hobbling prose.

With a due regard for the ancient dictum — *Poeta nascitur, non fit* — and for the various popular definitions of *genius* as distinct from the other powers of the mind, it must be admitted that the aggregate of mankind are, in character, generally what they are made by education; or what they are suffered to become from the want of it. These useful, but commonplace individuals, compose what may be termed neutral tints in the great picture of civil society; they present, in mass, those sober hues upon which the eye reposes without effort, and commonly with satisfaction, after it has expatiated upon the bold and striking features of the foreground of the moral and intellectual landscape. Even of those who have occupied distinguished positions

among their fellow-men, few, comparatively, manifested during their boyhood any clear and unequivocal indications of that ruling propensity, which opened and ripened into ultimate superiority. He has not always "lisped in numbers," who, from a peculiar organisation, or some other cause, is destined to become a true poet: instances innumerable, however, occur of a contrary kind; and where that impulse which has afterwards become the master passion of the mind, has strongly manifested itself during the earliest years, and mingled with the first studies of individuals whose subsequent lives have but illustrated the ruling predisposition. Such, the reader will already have perceived, was especially the case with Montgomery: nurtured in the bosom of a religious people, particularly addicted to psalmody, a fondness for which he may be said to have imbibed with his mother's milk; and inheriting, as he did, that peculiar constitutional temperament which has generally been allowed to be favourable to the access of poetical —not to say religious—impressions under these circumstances, it was not at all remarkable that he should attempt the composition of *hymns* in the style of those he was in the habit of committing to memory, and hearing sung. The seeds of early piety, cast into such a soil, were very likely to germinate, grow up, and unfold into those little poetical blossoms before mentioned. But that hexameter verses, Pindaric odes, and juvenile epics, should have been successively projected and proceeded with—saplings of thought that betrayed a deeper intellectual mould in which they might attain the magnificent breadth of the oak, or the elegant altitude of the pine—these, as already remarked, might have indicated to the conductors of Fulneck School, that their pupil was a boy of no common order. This, indeed, they readily discovered; and, with a laudable and Christian zeal,

they sought to inspire him with motives and feelings calculated to heighten his veneration for that important ministerial profession to which his parents had so piously devoted him, and of their own sincere regard for which they had given so noble and unequivocal a proof in their perilous missionary enterprise.

With the most complacent gratitude, he received the counsels and admonitions of friends by whom he knew that he was beloved; but in the recesses of his own heart, he cherished a secret ambition—the first yearnings of that "*immensa cupido*" which he could perhaps no more have voluntarily extinguished, than he could have created it: like his own *Javan*, in the "World before the Flood;"—

"Meanwhile excursive fancy longed to view
The world, which yet by fame alone he knew;
The joys of freedom were his daily theme;
Glory the secret of his midnight dream;—
That dream he told not though his heart would ache."

With deep regret the good Moravian Brethren witnessed the growing tendency to silent and mysterious abstraction, which every day rendered but more and more conspicuous and incurable in their pupil. Although poetry is not mentioned in connection with Montgomery's name in the Fulneck School Diary, before alluded to, it does contain some significant entries of an unsatisfactory character. After recording, under date of March 4th, 1786, that "it was determined J. Montgomery was to remain in the school, and be prepared for a teacher in the same: when this was told him, he seemed to be pleased with it"— the Diarist notices, under May 2nd, 1787, "complaints that J. M. was not using proper diligence in his studies, and was admonished on the subject;" and on July 3rd, "as

J. M., notwithstanding repeated admonitions, has not been more attentive, it was resolved to put him to a business, at least for a time." The fact is, as Montgomery himself once told Mr. Holland in plain terms—he was "turned out of the school at Fulneck," on account of alleged *indolence*. The individual at whose more immediate instance this course, doubtless so important in the future history of the poet, was adopted, was a German teacher of the name of Molther, son of the preacher of that name, so often mentioned in Mr. Wesley's Journal; and whose antinomian eccentricities, whatever their bearing on his own conduct, were the occasion of so much scandal to the Moravian cause in his day. There is a hymn by the senior Molther, in the Brethren's collection; and his son, the teacher in question, appears to have been musical, as he gave Montgomery lessons on the harpsichord, sometimes striking him and the other boys, when in a passion, with his fiddlestick. But if the poet did not retain a pleasing recollection of Molther, there was another of the teachers, Mr. Foster, a man of fine intellect, and afterwards a bishop in the Brethren's church, of whom he always spoke with both respect and gratitude.

All hope of seeing the wayward boy become a minister of religion, being now at an end, the Brethren resolved to place him in a situation which might, by the employment it would afford, divert his mind from those day-dreams of fame and ambition which had so fully possessed it. He was accordingly placed, preparatory to an intended apprenticeship, with a person of the name of Lockwood, a worthy man, and a member of the Moravian fraternity, who kept a retail shop at Mirfield, near Fulneck. This arrangement, so unpromising in itself, and so important in its issue, removed James Montgomery at once and for ever from those

studies and objects of the Christian ministry to which his parents had so fondly devoted him; and over which, had his training been less unsuccessful, he might, in the midst of his own people, at least, have shed a becoming lustre. Perhaps it might not be safe to speculate much on this point; but it may at least fairly be doubted whether — assuming the highest estimate of him as a Moravian preacher — he would ever have been so variously and extensively useful and disinterested a minister of religion in the pulpit, as he became through so many years, and in so many ways, in the situation providentially appointed as the sphere for the exercise of his abilities: but we shall encounter this question again. Meanwhile, it is right to state that, in after life, he never ceased to deplore this counteraction of parental hopes and preceptorial aims, as a sin against God. It is this early errancy from the religious orbit, which is, no doubt, symbolised in the following poetical fragment: —

"A star from heaven once went astray*,
A planet beautiful and bright;
Which to the sun's diviner ray
Owed all its beauty and its light;
Yet deemed, when self-sufficient grown,
Its borrowed glory all its own.

"A secret impulse urged its course,
As by a demon-power possest,
With rash, unheeding, headlong force,
It wildly wandered seeking rest;
Till far beyond the solar range
It underwent a fearful change.

* The poet has made use of this sentiment in an affecting passage of his Life of Tasso.—Lardner's *Cabinet of Biography*, Art. *Tasso*, p. 154.

"Dim as it went its lustre grew,
Till utter darkness wrapt it round,
And slow and slower as it flew,
Failure of warmth and strength it found;
Congealed into a globe of ice,
It seemed cast out of Paradise.

"At length amidst the abyss of space,
Beyond attraction's marvellous spell,
It lost the sense of time and place,
And thought itself invisible:
Though suns and systems rolled afar,
Without companions went that star."

Of the conduct of Montgomery behind the counter we never heard much: he did not remain there more than a year and a half: he had little to do, and still less inclination for the employment, such as it was. While there, he composed a large part of the poem of "Alfred;" and among his smaller pieces, a metrical version of the 113th Psalm, which, many years afterwards, was published, with some verbal alterations, in the collection now in use, under the auspices of the Archbishop of York, in various churches in his diocese, and elsewhere.

It has been already stated, that music was among the accomplishments attempted in the education of Montgomery at Fulneck; and to the charm arising from the "concord of sweet sounds," almost universally acknowledged by the young, and specially cultivated and consecrated among the Moravians, he was neither insensible nor inattentive. Indeed, next to poetry, his favourite recreation was music; and amidst the too abundant leisure which his situation in the little retail shop of the "Fine Bread Baker," at Mirfield, afforded, he used to "misspend his time" (as he expressed himself to us, when he referred to this period), "in the composition

of music." Several pieces, arranged by him, were performed with the assistance of his companions, our tyro himself being the leader of these juvenile concerts. He was at this time, to use his own expression, "music mad; and used to blow his brains out with a hautboy." His ear was by nature exquisitely tuned; and his taste and judgment relative to melody and harmony very correct; and there is little doubt that to this early initiation into a knowledge of this art, the smoothness of his versification was much indebted.

CHAP. VI.

1788—1790.

RESTLESSNESS OF YOUTHFUL GENIUS. — MONTGOMERY RUNS AWAY FROM MIRFIELD. — HIS IGNORANCE OF THE WORLD. — REACHES ROTHERHAM. — INTERVIEW WITH EARL FITZWILLIAM AT WENTWORTH. — THE VILLAGE INN. — ATTRACTS THE ATTENTION OF A CASUAL VISITOR. — AGREES TO ACCEPT A SITUATION AT WATH. — AFFECTING INTERVIEW WITH HIS LATE MASTER. — ROTHERHAM. — PAINE'S IRON BRIDGE. — THE VILLAGE OF WATH. — CHRISTENING OF LORD MILTON AT WENTWORTH HOUSE. — MR. BRAMELD. — MR. HUNT AND HIS FAMILY. — MONTGOMERY'S PRAYER FOR MRS. HUNT. — GOES TO LONDON.

THE good Moravian with whom Montgomery was placed at Mirfield* attended the preaching of the Brethren in that village, where the shop-boy, we are afraid, was *not* always found with his master; at least, they were not together there on the 19th of June, 1789; for on a fine Sunday morning of that date, having packed up a few things, including his MS. poetry, he slipped away from the house, and soon found himself on the high road.

Perhaps the most interesting—certainly the most authentic—account of the next movement of our hero, must be in his own words, as they lie before us in his own writing. "Here"—at Mirfield—"having very little to do but to amuse myself, I grew more unhappy and

* This village acquired a melancholy celebrity in 1847, when a respectable aged man, his wife, and their maid-servant, had their throats cut, in their own house, in the middle of a summer's day! For this horrid triple murder, two Irish hawkers were tried, condemned, and one of them executed at York.

discontented than ever: in an evil hour I determined to break loose and see the world. I was not bound [by indentures of apprenticeship] to my master, and knew that, if I left him, the Moravians could not compel me to return to him, though I was only sixteen years old. You will smile, and wonder too, when I inform you that I was such a fool as to run away from my master, with the clothes on my back, a single change of linen, and three and sixpence in my pocket. I had just got a new suit of clothes; but as I had only been a short time with my good master, I did not think my little services had earned them. I therefore left him in my old ones; and thus, at the age of sixteen, set out James Montgomery, to begin the world!" Like Rasselas, he had quitted the happy valley, which had only produced unhappiness in *him*, because, like the Abyssinian prince, his expanding mind felt itself a prisoner, and sighed after the freedom, the learning, and the splendours of the world without. But, alas for him! no guardian Imlac was at *his* side; and he had no sooner fairly quitted the hospitable roof of his indulgent master, than he saw, as well as felt, that

> "The world was all before him, where to choose
> His seat of rest, and *Providence* his guide."

Free he certainly was; and perhaps, for the first time in his life, felt himself really so; but of the road before him he knew not a yard, nor a single person whom he wished or expected to meet. But the restlessness of youthful genius impelled him; and if he sometimes looked behind him, it was with no intention of returning to a home where he had met with nothing but kindness, however little those who knew him best might interpret the ambitious stirrings of "his spirit within him" as the presentiment of a higher destiny.

In thus going forth, "not knowing whither he went," we believe he had only the vague aim to "go south:" certain it is, that any idea of reaching the town which afterwards became his life-long residence, never entered his mind; indeed he had never heard it mentioned but once, and that was in the reading of a letter from a schoolfellow, who had made the then formidable journey from Fulneck to Ockbrook. "Sheffield," said the boy, "is an ugly town, in a great black hole, where forty gentlemen are building a very large public-house!"* Still he might have come to Sheffield by chance; for at Wakefield, where the main road branches east and west, he, after some deliberation, took the latter, and at the close of the day found himself at Doncaster,—instead of at Sheffield, whither his kind master, starting in pursuit of the fugitive, and taking the *other* road, had gone to seek him. The next morning he started afresh on an equally unknown road, and, towards evening, entered a small public-house at Wentworth, a very humble hamlet under the shadow of the palatial residence of Earl Fitzwilliam—a house which he, at that time, little anticipated he would afterwards visit as an honoured guest.

He was at this little public-house, when a youth of the name of Hunt, who had come to Wentworth on an errand for his father from the neighbouring village of Wath, called to get a pint of beer. Seeing a strange youth in the room, with a small bundle beside him, and apparently not easy in his situation, he addressed him, and soon found that he wanted a place. The villager, finding that the wanderer had been in a shop, said that his father, who had an establishment at Wath, wanted an assistant; and here he determined to apply the next

* The Tontine Inn, erected 1783.

day. He did so; and Mr. Hunt agreed to engage him, provided the consent of his late master and his Moravian guardians could be obtained. He therefore returned to Wentworth, wrote to his friends, and awaited the result. Meanwhile, according to the testimony of Mr. Hunt, the following incident occurred:—Aware of his proximity to Wentworth House, and probably having heard something of the affable and generous character of its noble owner—the late Earl Fitzwilliam,—he conceived a truly poetical project—which was no other than the presentation of a copy of verses to his lordship, in person! Having ascertained that the noble earl was at home, and might often be met riding through his domains, our young adventurer, with a fluttering heart in his bosom, and a fairly transcribed copy of his poem in his pocket, proceeded to Wentworth Park, where he had the good fortune to meet his lordship. Amidst the confusion and agitation which it may be conceived he felt at this delicate crisis, he *did* present the verses to Earl Fitzwilliam, who, with characteristic condescension, read them on the spot, and immediately presented to the gratified author a golden guinea. This was the first profit, as well as the first patronage, which Montgomery's poetry ever procured; and we cannot record this anecdote—even though it may be somewhat apocryphal in its details—without a passing tribute of respect for the memory of an illustrious nobleman, with whose virtues we were well acquainted. According to local tradition, this incident, apparently so trivial in the annals of his lordship's munificence, led first to a residence in the neighbourhood of Wentworth, afterwards at Sheffield, thence to the ultimate respectability of the subject of these Memoirs, who ever cherished, and on all occasions expressed, the most sincere respect for Earl Fitzwilliam.

While at Rotherham, with a curiosity not unnatural in a youth who, although he must have heard and read about cannon, had probably never seen one, he visited, in the Masbro' suburb of that town, the celebrated establishment of the Messrs. Walker, to witness the operations of casting, boring, and turning heavy ordnance. There he saw, too, what interested him at least as much as the great guns — an iron bridge, which had been cast and framed after a model by the notorious Thomas Paine, who had some sort of connection with this establishment in 1788*; after which date, this bridge was experimentally set up in London, but in the end returned to the foundry as old metal. On the same premises, many years afterwards, the present Southwark Bridge was cast, and temporarily erected, previous to its removal to the metropolis.

To return to Montgomery, who shall give the result of his appeal to his friends in his own words: —

"When I had been on my travels about four days, I then wrote, as I had always intended to do, to my master; indeed, I left a letter behind me, declaring, in plain terms, the uneasiness of my mind, and saying that he should soon hear from me. I wrote to him to require a character, or recommendation to a situation which I had heard of; conscious that no moral guilt could be laid to my charge, and that in all my dealings I had served him with the strictest integrity. My master laid my letter before the council of Moravian ministers, who meet at Fulneck to regulate the affairs of their society; and they unanimously agreed to write any recommendation for me which I might require, if I obstinately persisted in my resolution of leaving them; but instructed him to make me any offers, and, if possible, to bring me back

* Rickman's Life of Paine, pp. 83. 164.; Porcupine's Paine, p. 38.

again.* He came to me, in person, at Rotherham, where I waited for an answer. I was so affected by his appearance, that I ran to meet him in the inn-yard; and he was so overwhelmed with tenderness at the sight of me, that we clasped each other's arms as he sat on horseback, and remained weeping, without speaking a word, for some time, to the great amusement of many — very many spectators." The spectators may have been amused with the sight; but we think the reader will be affected by the record of such an evidence of mutual esteem between parties so circumstanced. Montgomery proceeds: — "It required all my resolution to resist his entreaties and persuasions to return; but I at length overcame; and when he left me the next day, he gave a very handsome written character, and also called himself on my future employer to recommend me to him. He also supplied me with money, and sent my clothes and other things which I had left behind."†

* We direct attention to the kindness and consideration here displayed, under circumstances of extreme provocation, because many animadversions, and some vituperations, have been directed against the worthy preceptors at Fulneck, on the ground that they failed to recognise in their wayward pupil clear premonitions of a poetical genius, and to square their instructions accordingly; but surely, to say nothing of the vagueness of such boyish tastes in general, men who felt they had a high religious mission to fulfil, might well have been excused for seeking to mould him to the pattern of their own simple piety, and in conformity to the wish of his parents, rather than help to realise the dangerous dreams of worldly ambition; and the more so, inasmuch as they must have felt convinced that the church to which they belonged directed schemes of enterprise in its missionary fields, to which the most ardent and enthusiastic, as well as the most patient and plodding spirits might repair, even if the community at home had presented no sanctifying channel for the efflux of the "*ardor mentis in gloriam.*"

† Letter to Aston, dated "York Castle, Ap. 5. 1796." After the words quoted above, the writer adds — "What has befallen me

Wath—"the Queen of Villages," as this temporary resting-place of Montgomery was sometimes designated by the pardonable partiality of the native inhabitants,—is very pleasantly situated in an open, fertile valley, and on the banks of a canal which derives its name from the little rivers "Dearne and Dove," about midway between Barnsley and Conisborough, and within three miles of Wentworth House. Wath gave the title of Baron to the first Marquis of Rockingham. At the period referred to, the habits of the villagers were almost as unsophisticated as their homes were apparently sequestered from the rest of the world: nor had the old rustic superstitions of their progenitors faded from the spot. Invisible at nightfall, "Gabriel's hounds" were often heard yelping through the welkin; stories were told, and believed, of those who had been hardy enough to "watch the church" on St. Mark's eve; and few were the elders who had not either seen or heard ghosts; and fewer still, of the juniors especially, who did not expect to do so. A May-pole occupied the site of the ancient cross: there was a bell foundry in the village belonging to a person of the name of Hilton; and the execution of a large casting was an event of almost as much interest to the inhabitants as a similar occurrence is among the mountaineers of the Hartz and other districts of Germany. There are several bells bearing the name of Hilton in the neighbourhood; among the rest, one or two in the fine peal at Darfield, so remarkable for their "sweet silvery tone."* About thirty years after the sojourn of Montgomery at Wath, a great

since belongs rather to my literary than to my religious life, which I have now been sketching; but you see now the meaning of my expression, that I am only seven years old, having lived only so long in *the world* since I left the Moravians."

* Hunter's South Yorkshire, vol. ii. p. 117.

change had taken place there as well as elsewhere; but perhaps it was, even then, the only village in England where a monthly "magazine" was published. In less than twenty years more, the "march of intellect" impressed on the vicinity one of the most signal evidences of its progress, the formation of a railway. At this day a passenger in the Midland train from London to Leeds has hardly ceased to admire the fine old church of Rotherham, when he notices another but less conspicuous spire; and presently he hears from an officer, or reads in large letters painted along the wall, the announcement, "Wath Station."

Mr. Hunt, into whose service the runaway was now introduced, kept what might have been called "a general store," selling flour, shoes, cloth, groceries, and almost every description of hard and soft ware, which the inhabitants of Wath and the adjacent villages required: and it would be difficult to say what attractions Montgomery found here as compared with his former situation. He was indeed free: and as a bird escaped from long confinement in a cage often alights on the nearest bough, either in surprise at its liberty or to preen itself for a farther flight, the youthful poet, no doubt, felt that he was now in a position to make a future movement with less difficulty. We have heard him advert to the adventures of this week, as those upon which most apparently the whole of his future life turned; "for," said he, "had I taken the right instead of the left-hand road at Wakefield, had I not crossed over, I knew not why, to Wentworth, and had not Joshua Hunt noticed me there, it is quite certain that not a single occurrence of my future being, perhaps not a single thought, would have been the same: the direction of life's after current would have been entirely changed; whether for the better or the worse, who can tell? I only know that *I did wrong in running away.*"

It was in the autumn of this year that the late George the Fourth, then Prince of Wales, after visiting several noble families in the north of England, spent a day or two at Wentworth; on which occasion the most splendid *fête* which perhaps ever took place in Yorkshire was given. Not fewer than 40,000 persons were treated in the Park with meat and drink, and also with a sight of their future sovereign, who made his appearance on a balcony in front of the house, with his godson (the present Earl Fitzwilliam, then about three years old) in his arms. It has been said that this royal visit was the subject, and its date the period of presenting Montgomery's verses*: but this appears more than improbable; first, because there is a lapse of six weeks between the poet's departure from Mirfield, on the 19th of July, and the Prince's visit to Wentworth House, on the 2nd of September, 1789; and, secondly, we have heard Montgomery say explicitly, that he was *not* at Wentworth on the occasion referred to, having "staid by the stuff" at Wath, while his master and almost every other person in the village went to the fête. Of the alleged interview with Earl Fitzwilliam he would never speak.

Although but little more than eighteen years of age, Montgomery was remarkably grave, serious, and silent; exemplarily steady and industrious in his situation, rarely associating with any of the villagers, but devoting the whole of his leisure hours to reading and the composition of poetry. It will readily be supposed that an important personage to him would be a bookseller, because this profession was associated in his mind with

* In the little volume of verses, published in 1802, by George Hay Drummond, a son of the late Archbishop of York, will be found an "Ode performed at Wentworth House," before the Prince of Wales, on the occasion referred to in the text: the music was by Dr. Miller, of Doncaster.

the publication of verse, with all its splendid and flattering concomitants. Such a friend he found in a Mr. Brameld, who kept a small stationer's shop at Swinton, adjacent to Wath. With him, Montgomery soon formed an acquaintance, which tended to flatter and stimulate the genius of the youthful poet. It should be mentioned, as creditable to his industry and prudence, that, with the exception of these visits to Swinton, and once when called upon by a Moravian friend, he never spent an evening out of his master's house. Having resided about a year at this place, his way to London was prepared by the transmission of a volume of his MS. poetry, accompanied by a letter from Brameld to Harrison the bookseller in Paternoster Row: in a few days the poet followed, leaving with regret the family of Mr. Hunt, where he had been treated with the utmost attention and kindness.*

* That the family of Mr. Hunt should be warmly attached to Montgomery is not surprising, for he united to the industry and fidelity of the servant the meekness of the Christian; and such was the ascendancy the grace of God had obtained over his spirit, even amidst the stirrings of poetical ambition, and such the opinion entertained of his piety, that he wrote a prayer at the request and for the use of his mistress, who was labouring under a severe affliction; which prayer, in the handwriting of Montgomery, was kindly communicated to us by Miss Hunt, granddaughter of the lady. The prayer, which we here subjoin, carries its own evidence of the principles instilled into his mind by his Moravian preceptors, whose favourite theme is — a theme on which it would be impious to be indifferent, and upon which we cannot too often dwell—the LOVE of a *suffering* SAVIOUR; and seems to indicate also, from the circumstance of its containing as much of *instruction* as *petition*, that he considered Mrs. Hunt but imperfectly initiated into the great doctrines of the Christian faith: —

"O! Father of Eternity, Lord of Heaven and Earth, most humbly we desire to offer up our poor but best acknowledgments for the numberless instances of thy mercies and favours conferred upon us, thine unworthy creatures. Above all, we adore thy undeserved love, in giving up thy only Son out of thy bosom to be

As already mentioned, a belief in the existence of ghosts was, at the period of Montgomery's sojourn, very

a sacrifice for us, when we were aliens to God and rebels against our Creator. We lay wallowing in our own blood, chained to the world by our lusts, and slaves of the devil by our choice; there was none to pity, none to save us; we could not pity, much less save ourselves; but thou didst behold us with an eye of favour and bowels yearning with compassion; thou in tender mercy, in the fulness of time, didst send thy well-beloved Son to become our Redeemer and afterwards our Mediator before thy throne. We thank thee for his hard uncomfortable birth in a stable among the beasts: he came to his own, but his own received him not. Oh, let this teach us true humility, and his subjection to his parents be a lesson of obedience to us unto ours, and all who by thine appointment are placed over us. His meritorious life, his watching and fasting, his praying and preaching, every action, every thought, every word of our Saviour, prove a blessing to us his disciples; and, oh, may we walk worthy of the glorious example of so great and good a master! For us he agonised in the garden of Gethsemane, where, like a worm, and no man, he lay weeping, groaning, praying, if it were possible the bitter cup might pass away. But the decree was fixed, and he must drink it to the very dregs. For us his blessed head was crowned with piercing thorns, his sacred back was ploughed with scourges; for us he was spit upon, buffetted, abused, and blasphemed. As a lamb he was led to the slaughter, and as a sheep dumb before his shearers, so opened not he his mouth: one breath might have consumed his tormentors from the face of the earth; but man, lost man, must have perished everlastingly. Not so — Justice and Mercy kissed each other, the flaming sword of Justice was quenched in the heart and blood of our Redeemer, and Mercy opened the gates of Paradise to us, his redeemed. O God of infinite compassion, how shall we express our gratitude for his cruel sufferings on Mount Calvary, where he was offered up for us upon the accursed cross, and said, at length, '*It is finished*,' and bowed his head, and yielded up the ghost! His glorious resurrection, his ascension into heaven, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, completed the glorious work of salvation. May he see the travail of his soul, and be satisfied! May none of those whom thou, O Father, hast given him be lost! And grant, O grant, that each of us may add to that happy number, and eternity itself shall be too short to sing thy praises. This we beg for the sake of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, to whom," &c. &c.

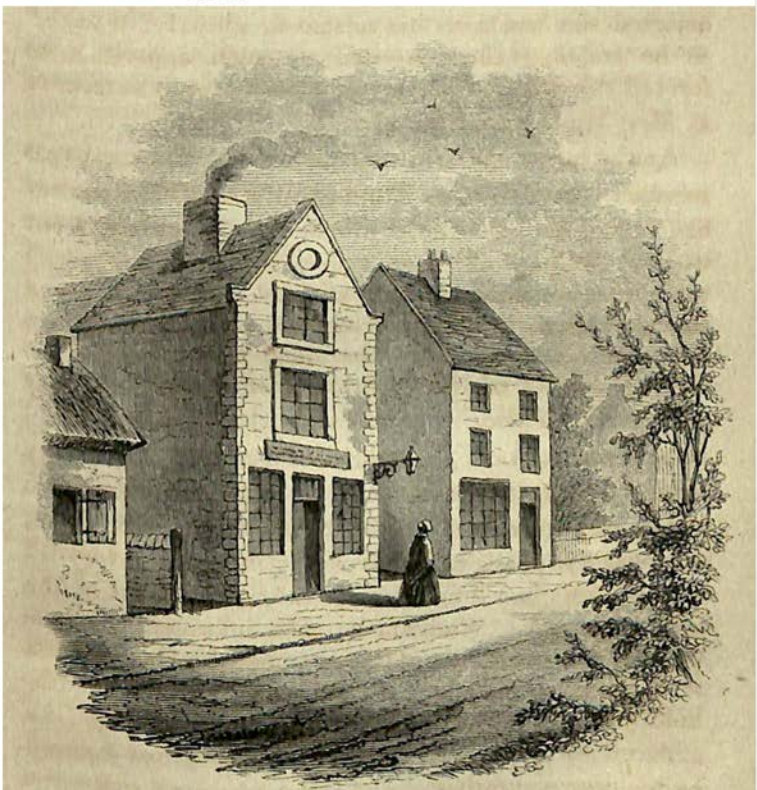
general in the sequestered village of Wath, as in most other places. When Mrs. Hunt lay ill, our poet was somewhat startled one day by the grave announcement of a familiar old dame, "Ah! Jemmy, your mistress will surely dee—I saw her spirit last neet, comin' out of your fold gate!" And die sure enough she did: Montgomery having no doubt that the gossip really believed she had seen his mistress's ghost! "though," as he added, "there needed no such apparition to foretell the death of one lying in such mortal extremity as Mrs. Hunt was at the time."

At the latter end of 1821, the writers of these pages together visited Wath. The master whom Montgomery had served had been dead fifteen years; but it was not without feelings allied to veneration that they gazed upon the house which had afforded such a timely and comfortable asylum to the fugitive, and which had so long been the scene of the daily industry and the nightly studies of the future author of "*The World Before the Flood.*" It is still standing, unaltered in appearance; and the subjoined cut will enable any visitor at once to identify it.

We met with a son of Mr. Hunt, an intelligent man, who was the poet's bedfellow here; indeed, the very individual who had found him in the little parlour of the public house at Wentworth. His information corroborated the preceding statement; and we should deem it an injustice done to a worthy man, were we to withhold this acknowledgment of the evidence which he adduced to prove how much Montgomery was beloved by his deceased father.

Casually visiting Wath (1854) soon after transcribing the foregoing passage, Mr. Holland saw and conversed with an old man who remembered Montgomery during his residence there: he described him as a slender youth,

shrinking from the cold, and still more from contact with the villagers generally, who regarded him with a sort of mysterious interest, as being sure "no vulgar boy." It should be mentioned that this ancient villager repeated, substantially as we have given it above, the story of the poet's interview with Earl Fitzwilliam in Wentworth Park.



HOUSE IN WHICH MONTGOMERY LIVED AT WATH

CHAP. VII.

1789—1790.

LABOURS OF THE REV. JOHN MONTGOMERY AND HIS WIFE AT BARBADOES. — REMOVAL TO TOBAGO. — CONVERSATION. — ORIGIN AND PROSPECTS OF THE MISSION TO THE WEST INDIES. — MR. HAMILTON. —RETURN TO BARBADOES.—SECOND VISIT TO TOBAGO.—NARRATIVE OF ATTEMPTS TO INSTRUCT THE NEGROES. — ENCOURAGING INDICATIONS OF USEFULNESS. — SOURCES OF TRIAL AND ANXIETY. — RETURN TO BARBADOES. — SAIL AGAIN TO TOBAGO. — MUTINY, CONFLAGRATIONS, AND TERROR ON THE ISLAND. — DESPONDENCY OF THE MISSIONARIES.

INSTEAD of immediately following Montgomery to London in the vain pursuit of fame and fortune, we must be permitted to carry the reader's attention for a while to those "isles beyond the western deep," where the parents of the poet were preaching, teaching, and suffering among negro slaves, little aware of the mental disquietude of their son in England. If any apology be deemed necessary for referring thus largely to these devoted Moravian evangelists, it will surely be found in the fact that not only was the whole tenor of the poet's life affected by their history, but those triumphs of freedom in the "West Indies" of which he sang so sweetly accelerated by their labours. The emancipators of the slave have done their noble work, and ministers of religion now preach a still more glorious freedom, where amidst toils and sufferings but little alleviated by evidence of success,

"Their meek forerunners waned and passed away."

We are therefore unwilling that John and Mary

Montgomery should lack such brief and transitory addition to the record of their mere names as these pages can supply.

The worthy Moravian, assisted by his devoted wife, continued to labour as a Christian missionary in the island of Barbadoes till August, 1789, when he removed to Tobago. Desirous of obtaining some knowledge of the poet's parents, and having been favoured by him with a perusal of Dr. Brown's "History of the Propagation of the Gospel among the Heathen," we embraced the opportunity, on returning the work, of eliciting a few particulars on the subject, by pointing him to a passage in which the name of Montgomery was introduced.* *Everett:* "Reference is *there* made to the Moravians, and a missionary of your name is noticed?" *Montgomery:* "The persons alluded to are no other than my good father and mother, of whose last days I have a most affecting, and to me very precious account, as detailed in one of the periodical publications of the Brethren: I have it up stairs in the office, and, if I can lay my hands upon it, you shall have it to read." While he spoke, the tears glistened in his eyes; and a peculiar tremulousness of voice, expressive of filial tenderness, brought every word home to the bosom of his friend, and made him almost wish he had not proceeded so far. Montgomery soon returned with the book. "It was," said he, "almost the first thing I laid hold of; take it, let it not go out of your hands—I would not lose it for any price—it has afforded great consolation to my mind—*they finished well.*" On the last words he laid peculiar emphasis. *Everett:* "The utmost care shall be taken of it. But allow me just to state that I understood your father and mother went to

* Vol. I. p. 457.

Barbadoes, and not, as stated by Dr. Brown, to Tobago." *Montgomery:* "Their first destination was Barbadoes; but they paid two or three visits to Tobago, and were finally appointed there by the Brethren, as you will perceive."

It may be necessary to state that the attention of the Moravians was first directed to Barbadoes in 1755, when two of the Brethren were sent thither, one of whom departed this life almost immediately on their landing, and the other withdrew from the connexion. A third who was sent to supply the place of the first followed him, in a short time, into eternity. The undertaking was then suspended till 1767, when Mr. Benjamin Bruckshaw, a native of Cheshire, resolved to go thither by himself, to renew the Mission. He met with a favourable reception from the president of the council, the resident clergy, and many of the planters, and was joined by Mr. J. Bennet, from North America, who assisted him in the work. Their united exertions were crowned with partial success at first; but through the removal of Mr. Bruckshaw to Antigua, in 1771, the death of Mr. Bennet in 1772, pecuniary difficulties, and some dissensions among the missionaries themselves, the work in which they were engaged sustained considerable injury. The cause, after this, remained stationary several years*; and the following is an account of the state of the Mission, as given by Mr. John Montgomery, the father of the poet, in 1789:—

"I firmly believe that our Lord will yet see of the travail of his soul in that island (Barbadoes). This was the first impression I had when I entered upon the labour there, and, amidst all trials, it never forsook

* Home's Sketches of the Missions of the United Brethren, pp. 366—9

me. The letters I received from the Brethren in Europe comforted me greatly, as they expressed the same confident hopes concerning the Mission. I wondered frequently at your patience in supporting so expensive a mission, without much visible fruit arising from our labours. Now the time of visitation appears to be at hand, and I think I have lived to see its beginning. Ever since Christmas, we could no more preach within doors, the number of our constant hearers having greatly increased. Several of our baptized negroes began to tell others what the Lord had done for their souls. Several of them brought their relations and friends to the meeting; and two of those who were in a manner compelled to come, were baptized, and one of them admitted to the Lord's Supper, before we left the island." *

Considering Mr. John Montgomery as now removed to Tobago, it may be proper briefly to state the causes which led to it. His first visit to the island was at the request of Mr. Hamilton, a gentleman of considerable property and influence; and whose indefatigable zeal to promote the external and internal welfare of his negroes, and those of other plantations, induced him to propose and encourage a mission among them; by means of which they might be instructed in the Gospel of Christ, and become acquainted with the path to eternal felicity. Though Mr. Hamilton had made repeated applications to the Moravian Brethren, yet they could not, for various reasons, be attended to with that promptitude which was desirable; one of the principal of which was, the possession of the island by the French, which rendered the government Roman Catholic; it was therefore considered doubtful whether, with any

* Period. Accounts of the Brethren, 1791, pp. 73—4.

certainty of permanency, a Mission could be established. Mr. Hamilton at length proposed a visit to Mr. Montgomery, and introduced him to the governor, Count Dillon, by whom he was received with courtesy and treated with kindness, and was promised protection and support. On the report of this visit, and a renewed application of Mr. Hamilton, signed by several other respectable planters, the synod of the Brethren met at Herrnhut in 1789, resolved to send a missionary to Tobago; and Mr. John Montgomery received a call to go thither.* The further progress of this Mission is as follows:—

"August 15th, 1789," says Montgomery's father, on his second visit, "we left Barbadoes, and were thankful for our safe and expeditious voyage to Tobago; for the heat of the sun was so intense, that we could not remain on deck, and below we found it very inconvenient. When we arrived at the island on the 18th, it was too late in the evening to reach Mr. Hamilton's dwelling; but a gentleman who had seen me here during my first visit, hearing that we had no lodging, offered us a room in his house, and treated us with the greatest kindness. The next day, at noon, Mr. Hamilton arrived, and conducted us to his house. I was sorry to hear that our friend, Count Dillon, governor of the island, was gone to France, and probably intends to resign his office. The 23rd, I went with Mr. Hamilton's family to attend the usual Sunday's service in the town. As yet no church has been built in the island, and divine service is performed in the town-house. Adjoining to this is the negro-market, and the noise they make during the service is such that hardly one sentence of the discourse can be understood. About a thousand negroes are

* Period. Account, 1791, p. 71.

generally in the market-place, and I saw only one at the service. In the evening I gave an exhortation to Mr. Hamilton's negroes. As this is done in the dining-room, and in the presence of the family, the negroes are kept in good order. The 25th, at noon, I met the children; few could come, for as soon as they can work they are employed in the fields. The 28th, I paid a visit to a gentleman who is a professed deist. As he has a great number of slaves, I asked him whether he would permit them to hear the Gospel, if a brother should settle in the island as a missionary? He promised not only not to hinder them, but to assist in promoting the cause; 'for,' added he, 'though I have my private thoughts in religious matters, yet I do not assert that I am in the right; and every one may act conformably to his own conscience.' During the following days I paid several visits to the negroes, but found not one who showed the least wish to be converted. They all ruin themselves in soul and body by the same sins and abominations that prevail in the other islands, and their whole minds seem absorbed in them. We received about this time letters from the Synod of the Brethren, informing us that it had been resolved to begin a Mission in Tobago, and that we were appointed to enter upon it. God our Saviour knows our weakness and inability; but, in reliance upon him, we have accepted the appointment, and commend ourselves and the poor negroes in this island to the prayers of all our brethren everywhere. We were now desirous of returning to Barbadoes as soon as possible, that we might give up our commission there, and then move hither.

"*Sept. 6th.*—A large number of negroes attended our meeting; but, alas! their attendance is not voluntary, but by order of their masters. Thus little real good can be expected at present; and some gentleman

even informed me that the negroes suspect their masters of interested motives in sending them to us, which makes them come with double reluctance. Another disadvantage lies in this, that hardly a fourth part of them understand English, and many of them make themselves intelligible to each other merely by signs. For this island has been but lately cultivated, and a large importation of new negroes is annually required, which will continue till the new generation of creoles is sufficiently numerous to work in all the plantations.

"In our meeting on the 13th, some European gentlemen were present, who expressed much satisfaction with the behaviour of the negroes. During the following week, Mr. Hamilton and his whole family being absent, we made good use of our time in visiting the negroes in their huts.

"*Oct. 7th.* — We called upon Mr. W——n, brother-in-law to Mr. Hamilton, who is a friend to the cause. He pointed out a place near to the town, as the most convenient spot for the dwelling of a missionary. It is advantageously situated on the chief road to the town, by which a great number of negroes from the plantations pass daily, and the town negroes would also find it convenient: but till I am settled here nothing can be finally determined. Mr. W——n took me to see three estates. The minister of the English church has paid a visit of four days to Mr. Hamilton's family. He has resided here only two years.

"On the 11th, the church minister and other European gentlemen were present at our meeting. They admired the quiet behaviour of the negroes; but I told them I had nowhere found reason to complain of the contrary. About this time I visited a poor dying negro, and spoke to him of the life eternal procured

for him by our Saviour, in whom I exhorted him to believe; but his repeated answer was, that since his birth he never had done any thing to offend any one. He was too weak to speak much, and died the day after. The good opinion the negroes have of themselves is astonishing; for, though they wallow in the worst of sins, they think they have a good heart, and love God. I sometimes visited Mr. W——n's negroes; but in travelling to and fro, got so thoroughly wet, that a severe cold ensued, which confined me for a week, and, as I could not have a meeting with Mr. Hamilton's negroes, I desired the Church of England minister to exhort them. After my recovery I was invited to visit a neighbouring gentleman, with whom I spoke much of the conversion of the negroes. But the minds of both whites and blacks are at present so much alarmed by accounts from France that all other considerations are become secondary, and the revolution in that country is the only general topic of conversation.

"*Nov.* 1*st.*—Several white people from the other side of the island were present at the meeting of the negroes, and expressed their satisfaction. The next week was a time of great uneasiness and fear, traces of a general insurrection having been discovered throughout the island. However, the planters were successful in gaining the goodwill of the soldiers, and thus all disturbance ceased for the present. I continued to hold meetings with the negroes and to visit them in their huts as usual; but could not convince them of their wretched state without God in the world. This is the work of the Spirit of God, and to him we look with confidence. I addressed a gentleman who had not yet sent his negroes to church, and asked him his reasons. He answered, that he did not think any of them wished to be converted; but added, that, if I would appoint a

day, he would assemble them, and I should preach to them. This was done accordingly, and the poor people seemed to listen with great eagerness. I must however own that, in general, I feel rather heavy in our meetings, for the negroes come as they do to work, being driven against their inclination. On the first Christmas holiday I could not converse with them, for they do nothing but eat, drink, and dance all day long. The day after, I read and explained the history of our Lord's incarnation to them.

"On the 27th, I was desired to meet the negroes of a neighbouring estate; but they were still so stupefied with the excess and drunkenness they had indulged in on Christmas day, that my attendance was in vain. I had now some idea how the celebration of these festivals is conducted; but the Lord can work wonders, and change the hearts and morals, as he has done in other islands.

"*Dec. 29th.* — We found a vessel sailing to Barbadoes, and our worthy host brought us on board. It was providential that he had given us an extraordinary supply of provision, for we spent twelve days between the two islands, though the voyage is frequently made in twenty-four hours."*

Mr. and Mrs. Montgomery remained at Barbadoes upwards of three months, and in a letter from Tobago, dated June 7th, 1790, write thus: "Having waited a considerable time for an opportunity to sail to Tobago, we left Barbadoes on the 22nd of April, and arrived here on the 27th. The captain went first on shore, to inform the governor of his cargo and passengers, as is the custom here. As soon as the governor heard our names, he gave orders that we should be brought

* Period. Accounts, pp. 67—71, for 1791.

on shore immediately, and sent a soldier to conduct us to his house. He came to meet us, took me by the hand, and assured me by his interpreter (for he could not speak English, nor I French) that he greatly rejoiced at our being at last arrived to settle, and should be glad to render us all the service in his power. Our goods were not examined; the officers placed on board for that purpose suffered them to pass free. The word of Scripture appointed for this day was, 'He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways,' Psal. xci. 11.,—and we experienced a gracious fulfilment of this promise, even in behalf of us his poor children.

"Mr. Hamilton had procured us a lodging with his brother-in-law, having much company at his own house, and knowing that we should be more at our ease at Mr. W——n's. However, as soon as the company left him, he sent for us, and we have been with him ever since, except once on a visit to the minister of the English church. But as to the main object of my coming hither, I could do but little, and seldom found an opportunity of meeting the negroes. Of the disturbances that prevailed here, you have heard before now, by the public papers. I have been a witness to the terror and confusion that reigned in this island. The first alarm was occasioned by a general mutiny among the soldiers, both in the town and the plantations. They first beat their officers most unmercifully; and then some sailed to the neighbouring island, others formed a garrison without officers. Two days after, the town was set on fire at two o'clock in the morning, when all peaceable people were fast asleep. The incendiaries intended the destruction of the whole place; and the houses being chiefly built of wood, the dryness of the season and a high wind favoured their wicked

design. The conflagration spread every way, and did not stop till it reached the sea. Indeed, the gentlemen in the country hastened with a great number of negroes to extinguish the flames; but the soldiers had shut up every avenue, and would not suffer one negro to pass till all was over. Some magazines that stood by themselves to windward were saved. A fortnight after, the soldiers embarked and set sail for France, and all were glad to get rid of them. At present some volunteers mount guard and do other military duty. You may easily suppose that these circumstances occasioned a general terror; for no one knew in what hour he might lose life and fortune. Both whites and blacks kept strict watch every night. During this dreadful period we looked confidently to our gracious and almighty God and Saviour as helpless children, and, believing He has sent us hither, offered up prayers and supplications to Him in behalf of ourselves and the island, that He would in due time silence the storm, dispel all darkness, and cause the light of his precious Gospel to shine in the hearts of the poor negroes. We felt his peace amidst the tumult, and put our trust under the shadow of his wings. To look out for a settlement in the present crisis was impossible, and no house could be procured with safety. However, as soon as the troubles subsided a little, we fixed upon a house near the town, and only wait for the removal of the present tenants."

Up to July 28th, 1790, Mr. John Montgomery saw no fruit of his mission, and was led to exclaim, "O that I knew but one soul in Tobago truly concerned for his salvation, how should I rejoice!" He subjoins, by way of postscript, to the above, "Having no opportunity hitherto to send what I have written to Europe, I will add the following: —

"It was the 17th of June before Mr. Hamilton would

suffer us to remove to our new dwelling, for he kindly detained us from time to time. The texts appointed for the day on which we began our housekeeping as missionaries, were remarkably suitable: 'He bringeth them into their desired haven; therefore let them exalt Him in the congregation of the people.'—'He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.'

"The day after, I went to church, and conversed with some negroes, who promised to tell their companions that, at four in the afternoon, I should be glad to see them at my house, and speak to them of their Creator and Redeemer. They all promised to come, but not one came. During the following week, I went frequently to the town to make myself known; and on the Sunday following addressed them again, and invited them to my house. They again promised to come, but not one appeared at the appointed time. On the following Sunday, July 4th, I waited a whole hour for hearers, when three came, with whom I spoke of the great love of God our Saviour to them and the whole fallen human race; and in about an hour's time nearly thirty had assembled, to whom I delivered a discourse on the words, 'God is love.' They behaved very well, and some promised to come again. A negro woman said, 'Many of us know very well how to go to church, and therefore we came to hear the new preacher, and we like very well what he says.'

"The Sunday after this, fourteen were at the meeting; but, on the two Sundays following, not one appeared. Between our house and the town is a plain along the sea-coast, upon which all kinds of diversion are practised on a Sunday afternoon. All the negroes who would come to us from the town, must pass close by this place; and thus it seems as if Satan had pitched

his camp opposite to us, and would not suffer any one to pass [redacted] the Gospel. What can I say more? Gladly would I say something more encouraging, but I cannot at present; nor can I describe in words the sensations of my heart in meditating on these subjects. Remember and pray for your poor distant brother and sister,

"JOHN AND MARY MONTGOMERY."

CHAP. VIII.

1790—1791.

MONTGOMERY IN LONDON.—SITUATION WITH HARRISON THE BOOKSELLER.—MS. OF "THE WHISKERIAD," AND MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.—SPECIMENS.—SECLUDED HABITS.—NEVER ENTERED A THEATRE.—FIRE AT THE ALBION MILLS.—WRITES "CHIMERA," A TALE.—ITS PUBLICATION IN DR. ANDERSON'S "BEE."—HALFPENNY BOOKS.—WRITES A NOVEL, AND AN EASTERN TALE.—BOTH DECLINED BY PUBLISHERS.—SWEARING.—AN INCIDENT.—DEPARTURE FROM THE METROPOLIS.

LEAVING the missionary couple in Tobago, where they continued to deliver that message of mercy which, faithfully received, made, even in those days, the African slave "the Lord's freeman," we return to Montgomery, who had exchanged the quiet valley of the Dearne for the vicinity of the busy Thames, the solitary field-walks of Wath for the bustling streets of London; and where the conviction came at first oppressively upon him, that if he had previously lived, as it were, out of the world, he was now surrounded by too many evidences that he had found its central vortex, the

"*Fumum et opes strepitumque Romæ.*"

Mr. Harrison, of Paternoster Row, to whom Montgomery had been recommended by Mr. Brameld, was not only an active and successful publisher, but likewise a contributor both in prose and verse to some of the periodical works which issued from his press. He had received the manuscript volume of poems, readily gave the author a situation in his shop, and encouraged

him to continue to cultivate his talents, but declined to print [redacted] en sent to him.

Aware, as we are, of the little interest with which the best efforts of juvenile versification are ordinarily regarded, especially in an age so prolific in really good poetry, we venture to select a few specimens of the work presented to Harrison, and upon the publication of which all the author's hopes of immortality were, as he afterwards remarked, at that time founded. They are curious, as the composition of a recluse boy, at a period when the facilities for reading, and the stimulus of intellectual improvement, were widely different from what they are at this moment.

"Now, Muse, let's sing of rats," says Grainger, in a passage of his poem, "The Sugar Cane," which excited the merriment of Dr. Johnson; and it seems our youthful poet adopted the same resolution, though "with a difference," for the first, and by far the most ambitious article in this little volume was entitled "The WHISKERIAD, *an Heroi-Comic Poem, in Three Cantos,*" and consisting of several thousand lines. It describes, in imitation of Homer's battle of the Frogs and Mice, a fierce conflict which fell out between certain belligerent cats and rats, and was evidently designed as a satire on the causes, conduct, and consequences of more important wars. The poem is laughable and spirited throughout, and the mock-heroic style well enough sustained: we need not, however, give any extracts.

Of the miscellaneous pieces, the first is an "Ode to Solitude," consisting of 147 lines, and of which we have already given a specimen.

This is followed by ten four-line verses, entitled "PEACE," an elegy, beginning —

"Thou lily of pleasure and rose of delight,
Sweet Peace! how transcendently glorious and bright," &c.

Peace of mind is the subject of the poet's invocation, but his lines contain no striking passage except, perhaps, the following:—

"The bloom of my youth is quite blasted and wan,
A pale, meagre phantom—I'm scarcely a man;
So dreadful is grief, and so furious despair,
All pleasures are racks if sweet Peace is not there.

"Then haste, thou dear stranger, o'er my breast descend!
And come to my bosom, and be thou my friend:
O warm me, quite frozen, with heavenly flame,
Of my soul take possession, and fill my whole frame."

The next article is an extempore squib, "On hearing a miserable Performer on the Organ." It shows that the writer could not at this time listen to the murder of sweet sounds with indifference:—

"Wretched bungler! cease your jargon,
Nor profane the sweet-voiced organ:
Like a *long-eared*, braying ass,
Shrieks the treble, roars the bass;
But when *earless asses* play,
Orpheus' lyre itself must bray."

After this, a hiatus occurs in the MS., the leaves from p. 69. to p. 76. being cut out; on the latter of which some poem concludes with a pleasing simile of two rivers rising at the same fountain, and after flowing awhile in opposite directions, at length reunite in "the infinite sea."

An "Ode for Christmas, 1787," succeeds, in which the youthful poet shows some sparks if not of Pindaric, at least of hallowed fire: the following is the first stanza:—

"The depths, the unfathomed depths of love, I sing!
The greatest deed of heaven's Almighty King:
O love, thou muse of heaven! my breast inspire!
Give me a seraph's voice, a tongue of fire,
That, warmed with kindling raptures, I may raise
Celestial love! thy all-transcending praise;
For thou art God—the only God supreme;
My Muse, my God, my Saviour, and my theme!"

The remaining lines (about 150) are rugged and inharmonious; but the sentiments, although frequently stretched to the utmost verge of sober meaning, are all correct, and exhibit, in the distinctness of the poet's conceptions on this subject, the value of his religious education.

Odes to Easter and to the Day of Judgment follow, and to both of them the same remark may be applied. Many incidental allusions to the Day of Judgment, as a subject for poetry, occur in these Memoirs; of the attempt before us, we need only say, that it is very long, and, on the whole, very indifferently executed.

Page 100. introduces us to "TRIUMPH," a Pindaric Ode. This must have been written when he was twelve, or, at most, thirteen years of age. The following are the introductory lines:—

"Hark! the trumpet sounds sonorous,
To the full-voiced martial chorus;
So the British hero comes,
Colours flying,
Voices crying,
Hail, triumphant warrior, hail!
Beat the hollow-sounding drums;
Let your praises mount the gate;
Let the shrill fife's pipe resound;

From the hautboy's warbling throat
Pour the animating note;
From the horn, in tone profound,
Roll the full thunder of majestic sound!
And the clarionet divine
Shall the martial concert join:
Rise, ye valiant youths, arise,
And rend with joyful shouts the ringing skies;
Lo he comes, resound his fame,
Rodney, Rodney, is his name!"

After this exordium, according to the custom of Pindaric bards, our author's stanza goes stark mad with rapture; and epithets of all sorts, and lines of all lengths, crowd the ranks of the poem. In one line he bids the "nobler bards of Britain sing:" some of them did so in as good earnest as our poet, and their songs, like his own, have had the fate of victory celebrations in general—to be forgotten. Amidst all the rant of this piece, there are, of course, many striking lines; a patriotic enthusiasm pervades the whole; and the youthful poet declares, after praising his hero, that

"When Britons, fixed on conquest, take the field,
Not Gaul alone, but all the world must yield."

Next in order, follows "The SEASONS," a poem, in four Pindaric Odes. *Spring*, of course, is first apostrophised; and after rejoicing, for about eighteen lines, at the departure of winter, in a strain not dissimilar to one which he subsequently employed*, the lark is allowed to herald the woodland choir; when—

* When Montgomery was told that the thought employed in the opening lines in this Ode on Spring was discoverable in his "Remonstrance to Winter," published many years afterwards, he observed, "A man may surely be allowed to make use of himself."

"Roused with his song, the feathered poets raise
Their choral voices in one hymn of praise;
And whilst the morn, with lavish bounty, sows
The orient heaven with amaranth and rose,
The woodland concert swell their warbling throats,
Thrill the rapt ear with all the power of notes."

After about thirty lines in allusion to rural scenes, the following description of the *rainbow* occurs; it is the first allusion in Montgomery's poetry to an object which not only furnished him several years afterwards with the title of his newspaper, but, subsequently, with many exquisite similes and illustrations:—

"How changed the scene! what fulgent colours glow
In yon grand arch, th' Almighty Father's bow!
Superbly drest
In gaudy vest;
Blushing crimson—modest blue;
The golden grace of autumn's scene,
And beauteous spring's delightful green,
Captivate the ravished view."

This glimpse of the rainbow somewhat unaccountably reminds him of the end of the world, and he indulges in a long digression on that subject. The following lines would not have been unworthy of Young:—

"The host of suns and worlds that o'er the pole
Their boundless paths in flaming grandeur roll,
Shall fall like dewdrops from the shaken thorn,
Brushed by the passing swains at early morn;
And thou, O sun! transcendent spring of light,
Thy radiant globe shall be involved in night;
Pluckt from thy sphere, thy glories fade away,
And, like a spark, shalt glimmer and decay;
Yea, at the glance of God's consuming eye,
Nature shall in an instant burn and die."

Summer succeeds, to the extent of 430 lines, and is, on the whole, one of the least striking of the pieces. It was written at the age of sixteen; and although it contains too many of those common-place references to rural affairs, which have formed the staple of juvenile rhymesters at periods, it is not without some lines of comparative power and beauty; especially a description of Etna, and of the singing of the nightingale. The poet's rapturous dedication of himself to the Muses, in the following passage, is interesting, from the earnest tone of poetical devotion, as well as the striking contrast with his later highly-finished style, which it displays:—

"O heavenly Muses! to you I consign
Myself and my genius, with all that is mine;
With you I can live, with you I can dwell,
Or in the full city or eremite's cell.
'Twas in the young dawn of my reason your rays
Illumined my path, and directed my ways.
My youth you attend, though unfruitful and green,
And scarcely arrived at the goal of eighteen;
O still lead me on, if secured from death's rage,
From youth to full manhood, and glorious old age;
Though poverty chill should depress my cramped wing,
Forbid me like Homer or Milton to sing,
E'en still you can warm and enliven my breast,
If only with fancy and utterance blest.
All things are unstable—all under the sky,
All riches, and pleasures, and honours must die:
But you shall survive, and your heavenly lay,
Though the skies shall evaporate, and earth shall decay.
In fullest perfection exalt the glad strain,
For music and poetry for ever shall reign!"

Autumn follows next, containing about 230 lines; but it does not present any passage which is worth tran-

scribing at length. The writer alludes to some of his favourite poets—Homer, Pindar, Milton, Dryden, Pope, and

——"Young! thrice honoured name:
Great son of genius! son of fame!
Religion warms his soul with heavenly strains,
His works shall live while Virtue's self remains."

He then observes, that all these constellations are set in "endless night," but,

"As when the Phœnix on the pile expires,
Another rises from the funeral fires,"

—so, from the ashes of the defunct British bards the "mighty Cowper springs."*

"Long live the sacred bard, whose hallowed strain
Inspires the just, and charms e'en the profane."

The writings of this sweet, truthful, and amiable poet had, as we have seen, early attracted the attention, and secured the affection, of Montgomery.

Winter, the concluding ode, is very long, sometimes powerful, but very unequal:—

"Ye towering Alps! tremendous scene!
Ye rocks with horror crowned,
With clouds and vapours girded round;
What devastation spreads the plain,
When from your tyrant heads you throw
Your diadems of solid snow!"

* This thought he afterwards, and with greater propriety, though in reference to a very different character, recast into the following verse:—

"Peace to the dead.—In Scotia's choir
Of minstrels, great and small,
He sprang from his spontaneous fire,
The Phœnix of them all!"

Verses on BURNS.

How strikingly the sentiment in the foregoing lines recalls the well-known song in Byron's "Manfred," beginning, —

> "Mont Blanc is the monarch of mountains;
> They crowned him long ago,
> On a throne of rocks, in a robe of clouds,
> With a diadem of snow," &c.

After mentioning the storms and the winds of the season, the following lines occur, which show that our young poet attempted to produce effect by rugged alliteration: —

> "Dread, with unutterable terror vast,
> Resounds, resounds, resounds the loud'ning lengthening blast.
> The mountains reel, and from their bursting sides
> The rushing rivers roll, rough, raging tides;
> The frantic inundations sweep
> Trees, flocks, and cottages into the deep."

The poem concludes with a spirited apostrophe to the power, the wisdom, and the love of God.

While Montgomery was in London, he indulged his taste for seclusion almost as much as when he resided at Wath; and, whether regarded as the effect of previous moral training, or as the mere result of his love of solitude, it may be mentioned, as a remarkable fact, that he never entered a theatre during his residence in London. Once, in after life — we believe during a visit there in 1795 — he went to Covent Garden; and, at a still later period, he saw — and in common with every one who ever did see her, enjoyed — Mrs. Siddons, when acting at Sheffield, in her leading characters — Lady Randolph, in "Douglas;" Lady Macbeth; Jane Shore; and Isabella, in Southeran's play of the "Fatal Marriage." It is perhaps a still more remark-

able fact, that he never, on that or any future expedition to town, went to see the British Museum! When asked, many years afterwards, whether he visited any of the public institutions? he replied, "No; I had no curiosity for such things at the time." This was remarkable in an active-minded youth, nineteen years of age, who had been brought up in the country. There was, however, one striking spectacle, with which the residents of the metropolis are unhappily but too familiar, which he did go to see—a great fire. The Albion flour-mills, near Blackfriars Bridge, were burnt down on the 1st of March, 1791,—Montgomery witnessed the conflagration.

Having been disappointed in his hopes of publication, he was advised to direct his attention to *prose*, as more likely to be successful than poetry. This was not at all congenial to the ambition of the young bard, who had, in his own estimation, scaled some of the heights of Parnassus: to turn to prose, appeared to him a descent from the point of elevation to which he had fancied himself raised. He, however, set himself to work, and soon produced "Simple Sammy; or, the Lilliputian Quixote." This he offered to Marshall, who at that period sold "*books, bound and gilt, for one half-penny;*" but that which Montgomery produced "was to have made a *sixpenny volume*," as he laughingly observed to us afterwards, when speaking of his residence and employment in the metropolis. The main story was entitled "Chimera; or, a Tale of a Looking Glass." When the MS. was presented to Marshall, he observed, "You can write better than this; you are more fit to write for *men* than for *children*." Montgomery replied, it was the first *prose work* he had written; and Marshall declined to publish it.

The first weekly number of an Edinburgh periodical, edited by the late Dr. Anderson, under the

title of "THE BEE,"—a title previously adopted by Goldsmith, and, before him, by Budgell—appeared in December, 1790; it contained, at the beginning, an announcement of prizes to be awarded to the writers of the best historical sketch, biographical notice, literary essay, or poetical composition, which should be sent in before the month of May in the year ensuing. Of these subjects, a *gold medal*, or *five guineas*, was offered "for the best original miscellaneous essay, story, apologue, or tale, illustrative of life and manners; or effusion or disquisition on any subject that tends to interest the heart and amuse the imagination, in prose."

Montgomery happening to see this announcement, immediately proceeded to furbish up his maiden essay, and in due course transmitted it to Edinburgh, as a candidate for medallic honours. In the number of "The Bee" for August, 1791, the decision of the adjudicators of the premiums was published, and Montgomery, although unsuccessful as a prizeman, was flattered by the assurance of the editor, that "though this piece has some very obvious defects, and is evidently written by a young person whose style is not yet chastened, yet it discovers a fund of fancy and humour, which ought, he thinks, abundantly to atone for these defects. The great modesty of the writer, too, in the letter which accompanied it, tended very much to conciliate his favour. By the author's permission, he will submit this piece to the readers of 'The Bee.'" The permission to publish was probably given; for "The Chimera," with its motto, "*monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens*," appeared in "The Bee" for November of the same year. This "tale," if tale it can be called, was afterwards rewritten, though not improved, and published by the author, with some other pieces, in a

volume presently to be mentioned: it is not, however, either particularly striking in itself, nor does it exhibit the slightest trace of that charm which ultimately characterised the productions of the same pen. The idea caught and expanded is, that of a number of individuals advancing in succession to look at a "monster" like that indicated by the motto, when each person, on being shown in a looking-glass — a sort of moral mirror — his own similitude, starts back with affright at the horrid apparition — of himself! "And now, reader, what could this mean? Mark the wickedness, the treachery, the depravity of the human heart. These mirrors, perhaps you will say, were carried about by the owners to remind them of their own deformity. No such thing; but merely to expose both friends and foes, by holding the mirror before their faces on every occasion, and where or whensoever they meet them; and history says, that since the introduction of looking-glasses into this unhappy village [Gotham], every individual was perfectly acquainted with all the faults of all the rest of the inhabitants, but utterly ignorant of his own."

The "Chimera," upon which we have perhaps dwelt too long, may be dismissed with the following incident: — *Holland:* "The sonnet on the 'Crucifixion,' which you have printed in the same volume with 'Greenland,' is singularly striking: does the Italian original justify the expressions as you have translated them?" *Montgomery:* "It is, indeed, a sublime composition: I have destroyed the legitimate structure of the sonnet, on purpose to preserve the force and advantage of the expressions." *Holland:* "I was a little surprised, the other day, to meet with this sonnet printed with some carols on a sheet of the worst paper I ever saw, price one halfpenny." *Montgomery:* "They were *godly songs*, I suppose?" *Holland:* "Yes, sir; but it had experienced singular

vicissitudes." *Montgomery:* "I once met with a somewhat similar incident. I was walking along the piazza at Buxton, and happening to look in at a bookseller's window, I saw a book spread open with a smart frontispiece, entitled 'Chimera, or a Tale of a Looking-Glass; a Tale for Children!' Chimera! thought I—I must have seen this before; and presently recollected it was the title of one of my own tales in the 'Whisperer.' I bought the book, and discovered it was the identical composition, adorned with a considerable number of tolerable embellishments, although the tale itself is most unsuitable for children."

From the hint given by Marshall, that he "was more fit to write for men than children," Montgomery set to work, and wrote a novel, in imitation of the style of Fielding. He at once placed this in the hands of Lane, the publisher, who observed, that he was just going down to his country house, and would take the MS. with him, and read it. On his return to town, Montgomery waited upon him, and was astonished ("*petrified*"—to use his own expression) to hear Lane say, "You swear so shockingly, that I dare not publish the work as it is." "This," said he to us, "was like a dagger to my heart, for I never swore an oath in my life, nor did I, till that moment, ever perceive, as I ought to have done, the impropriety of making fictitious characters swear in *print*, as they do in Fielding and Smollett, who had been my models in that novel; but swearing was more the character of that age than the present."* Lane, however, told him, that if he would re-write the work, he would give him twenty pounds for it. This

No one can read Gibbon's Letters to Lord Sheffield without being surprised, if not shocked, to see how frequently they are disfigured by evidences of this vulgar vice.

was a tempting bait to his ambition and his poverty, and he resolved to accept it; but presently leaving his situation, the revision of this story was reserved for his long leisure in York Castle, five years afterwards. When he had remodelled the whole work, he offered it to Lane for forty pounds. This was refused; and it often afforded him the most sincere satisfaction in after years that he had not, among other occasions of regret, to lament the publication of what must have given him so much pain in the retrospect. The fate of this amusing but unchastened composition will be noticed in a subsequent page.

Though he here met with another, and—he may well have deemed it at the time—a serious disappointment, yet there was sufficient in Lane's proposal to keep hope alive, and encourage an ardent mind like Montgomery's in the work of composition. Accordingly, he soon produced an "Eastern Tale," and carried it one evening to a publisher in town, to whose private room he was introduced through the shop, presenting his MS. to the awful personage with equal trepidation and formality. The cautious bibliopolist read the title, counted first the pages, then the lines in each, and after a brief calculation, turned to the author, who was not a little surprised at this mode of estimating the merit of a work of imagination—by pinching it between the thumb and fingers!—very civilly placed the copy in his hand, saying, "Sir, your manuscript is too small—it won't do for me; take it to ——, he publishes these kind of things." The young author withdrew from the presence of the literary Rhadamanthus with so much embarrassment and precipitation, that in repassing through the shop, he bolted his head right against a patent lamp, smashed the glass, and spilt the oil! He was endeavouring to frame an awkward apology, when he saw the shopmen were

enjoying a hearty laugh at his expense, which gave a less serious air to the accident than he had at first apprehended. He rushed into the street, with all the emotions of "the bashful man;" and yet he could scarcely then himself refrain from laughing at a scene that might almost have tempted Hogarth to resume his pencil, even after he had finished his "Tail-piece." The refusal to print which he had encountered was, however, the most painful part of the business; for by this his prospects of success, whether in prose or verse, still appeared inauspicious. Of this, the disaster of the lamp, to a superstitious mind, might have been deemed ominously conclusive. In consequence of these discouragements, and a casual misunderstanding with Harrison, the young and enthusiastic but sadly disappointed poet took a farewell ramble along the bank of that great river where he had lately witnessed the fire, and finally made up his mind to return to Yorkshire; but still indulging in musings akin to those of the translator of Juvenal:—

> "An hour may come, so I delight to dream,
> When slowly wandering by thy sacred stream,
> Majestic Thames! I leave the world behind,
> And give to Fancy all th' enraptured mind:
> An hour may come, when I shall strike the lyre
> To nobler themes." *

That hour, indeed, came; but it was, as yet, remote. For the present, having consoled himself with a rhyming diatribe, of considerable length and some smartness, on the trite theme — the lack of patronage for young literary aspirants! — Montgomery left London, in the month of March, by a heavy coach for Wath, passing through Sheffield. When seated fairly in the vehicle, he began to reconnoitre his fellow-passengers, consisting of three

* Gifford's Mæviad, l. 217.

individuals—a commercial traveller, a young woman, and a gentleman of very singular appearance, whose place in the coach was opposite our hero, who, in after life, could never erase from his mind the impression made by this personage. Young as the poet then was, he presently perceived that the stranger who sat *vis-à-vis* to him, in stern silence, was a man of no common mould; indeed, he felt as if he was suddenly placed in the company of one of those dark-visaged heroes of romance, of which his imagination was then so full. Cortez, or Pizarro, he thought within himself, might be like this man. His figure was tall and thin; he had an atrabilious countenance, a blue beard reaching almost to his keen eyes, from the occasional glances of which Montgomery shrunk as from the fascination of a rattle-snake. He had, besides, a spasmodic affection of the muscles of his face, which added not a little to the impression which his presence produced on the sensitive youth. "He was," said Montgomery, "precisely one of those persons whom you feel it would be unsafe to offend." While in the coach, he remained perfectly silent; but when at table, his manners were those of a gentleman. On resuming his seat, however, he always "crept into his shell," and maintained his inflexible but dignified taciturnity. This was a period of Montgomery's life when, to him, human character, in its infinite varieties, was a new study, and of which the subject before him was a striking specimen. On the arrival of the coach at Nottingham, the stranger left it, and Montgomery was particularly anxious to learn his destination. His curiosity only enabled him to read the label of a trunk, addressed "Hon. Captain Byron;" and his persuasion, in after years, was, that the individual who had interested him so powerfully was the father of the celebrated and noble poet of that name, who was travel-

ling to the family mansion of Newstead Abbey, in that neighbourhood.

While in London, his attention had been caught, and his playful fancy a good deal amused, by a caricature which was exhibited in the print shops, representing a gentleman dandling a very fat lady, plentifully decorated with bags of gold, labelled "1000*l.*," &c. It turned out that the female passenger in the coach was waiting-woman to the lady whose marriage had given occasion to the above representation, and was following her mistress to Westmoreland. With this young woman Montgomery became very chatty, and was not a little entertained by the details which she gave of the lady's immense fortune.

Notwithstanding he had thus turned his back on London, the scene of his golden expectations, this journey afforded too many adventures, real or imaginary, to be suffered to pass without a record. Accordingly, when he got to Wath, he wrote a humorous "History of what did *not* happen in a Journey from London." This, of course, contained notices of some strange and whimsical adventures, such as the annals of a commonwealth of ants, which, after having existed 500 years, was destroyed by the coach-wheel on Nottingham forest; the history of a game cock upon which they dined at the inn, and whose prowess and battles were detailed by the landlord during the meal of his guests, who experienced a tough corroboration of his statements. These, with droll descriptions of various incidents connected with the passengers, made up this strange way-side product of his youthful imagination.

CHAP IX.

1790—1791.

MONTGOMERY RETURNS TO HIS OLD SITUATION AT WATH. — RECOLLECTIONS OF LONDON AUTHORS. — D'ISRAELI. — HUNTINGTON S.S. —POETICAL PURSUITS CONTINUED.—ATTENDS THE VILLAGE CHURCH. — NANCY WAINWRIGHT. — SWATHE HALL. — HANNAH TURNER. — RURAL SUPERSTITIONS. — INDEPENDENT CHAPEL. — MR. GROVES. — DREADFUL HURRICANE IN TOBAGO. — SUFFERING OF THE MISSIONARIES THERE. — DEATH OF THE POET'S MOTHER. — HER DYING TESTIMONY. — HER BURIAL-PLACE.—DEATH OF THE POET'S FATHER IN BARBADOES. — HIS GRAVE. — FILIAL FEELINGS AND POETICAL TRIBUTE.

Our poet re-entered the dwelling of his old master, on the banks of the Dearne, "a sadder and a wiser man" than he left it. Experience had shown him, that to reach London was less difficult than to attain the honours of the press, either in prose or rhyme. But still, if his designs of authorship had been frustrated, the edge of his intellect was not dulled, but rather sharpened by the recent trial of its powers; so that, while he attended with undeviating regularity to the duties of Mr. Hunt's shop, his cogitations by day and his dreams by night were more than ever identified with the pursuits, if not the ambition of literature. It was, indeed, during this second sojourn at Wath, that he conceived the rudiments, or framed the first sketches, of some of those sweet little pieces which have acquired a permanent interest among his minor poems. Besides, however he might miscalculate the value of his earliest literary efforts, and suffer from the rebuffs of publishers, his brief sojourn in London had not been devoid either of instruction or gratification. He had,

at least, seen something of books; and, what was more interesting at the time, something of authors. Among the visitors at Harrison's shop was I. D'Israeli, at that time inclined to poetry, afterwards author of the "Curiosities of Literature," and other delightful works of the same class.

There was another visitor of a far different character, whom Montgomery was wont sometimes to recal in after life—the celebrated William Huntington, the converted "coal-heaver," once a popular but eccentric preacher in Gray's Inn Chapel. Montgomery described him as a short, stiff, elderly man, with a dark-red face, grave and quiet in his manner. His redoubtable compeer in the Calvinistic pulpit, Timothy Priestley, a brother of the well-known philosopher of the name, having published in his "Looking-Glass" something offensive to "S. S.," the "Sinner Saved," as Huntington called himself, the latter turned the reflection against his opponent in a pamphlet entitled "Timothy shaved by his own Glass."

Mrs. Charlotte Lenox, author of the "Female Quixote," and several other works, but better remembered now as having enjoyed the friendship of Dr. Johnson, was an occasional visitor at the same shop; and, as the first literary *lady* the youthful poet had seen, his curiosity was stimulated by her history and her appearance, and his feelings were gratified by being allowed to escort her to her carriage in the street.

We have already alluded to the church at Wath. Here Montgomery generally attended divine service on the Sunday, with Mr. Hunt's family; and in an adjoining pew sat the late Thomas Tuke, Esq.*, his two

* Mr. Tuke died in 1810, "leaving," says Mr. Hunter, the historian of the district, "a will containing some fantastic bequests.

sisters, and a relative, Miss Wainwright.* "Nancy Wainwright was one of our Wath beauties, who, I am afraid," says Montgomery, "I sometimes looked at in church more than was proper." Every reader of Montgomery's works will be familiar with the exquisitely tender verses on "Hannah;" and village tradition justly identifies her with the daughter of Mr. Turner, who resided at Swathe Hall, an old-fashioned mansion pleasantly situated between Wath and Barnsley, which the poet sometimes visited. Of the house and its earlier history† we have heard him speak; but the name of Hannah Turner never, in our hearing, escaped his lips. The "Vigil of St. Mark," which he was strongly inclined to suppress, in the general collection of his poems, in later life, but that "it reminded him so pleasantly of the psalm-singing at funerals in Wath churchyard," was founded on a superstition prevalent in the village. He occasionally attended an Independent chapel at the adjacent hamlet of West Melton, to hear a Mr. Groves, whom Ebenezer Elliott describes as "one of the most eloquent and dignified of men."

During his brief residence at Wath, it was one part of his employment—and by no means the least pleasant part, considering the aspect of the neighbourhood, and

One was a sum of money to be expended every year in forty dozen of penny loaves, that were to be thrown from the leads of the roof of the church of Wath every Christmas Day for ever."—*South Yorkshire*, vol. ii. p. 73.

* Married to the late John Smelter, Esq., of Richmond, near Sheffield. She died May 30, 1844, aged 70.

† In the seventeenth century, Swathe Hall was the residence of a member of the Wordsworth family, who were much connected with the Puritans. Good old Oliver Heywood often visited and preached in the Hall during the earlier part of his strangely harassed life.—Hunter's *Life of Heywood*, p. 181.

the opportunities it gave him of being at large—to deliver goods and collect accounts at different places in the vicinity. We have heard him dwell with evident delight on the recollection of little journeys which he used to take on horseback between Wath and the hamlets of Houghton* or Thurscoe†, dwelling particularly on the ruminations which he used to indulge, the poetic fancies he cherished, or the stealthy perusal of works of fiction which he enjoyed in bowery lanes, the solitude of which was then unstartled by proximity to the North-Midland Railway.

While the poet was undergoing the hard but wholesome discipline of his London visit, his parents were pursuing their vocation amidst sufferings, literally "unto death," in the West Indies. In a letter from his father to the Moravian Brethren in Europe, dated September 6th, 1790, we read, "You have already heard of the commotions in this island (Tobago), and of the great fire that happened in the town. But the damage done by the latter is a trifle to that occasioned by a hurricane in the night between the 10th and 11th of August. Above twenty vessels were driven on shore and lost in different parts of the island, seven of which were wrecked on the coast near our dwelling.

* There are two Houghtons, Little, and Long or Great Houghton. The latter is somewhat memorable in the history of the civil wars for the attack which was made upon the house of Sir Edward Rodes, a zealous Parliamentarian, who resided there. In 1841 it became identified with poetical associations; Ebenezer Elliott, the "Corn Law Rhymer," having there erected and occupied the house in which he lived and died.

† It was on his way from Thurscoe, one cloudy night, when the planet Venus shone out so suddenly and lustrously, that the youthful poet composed the first stanza of his charming "Ode to the Evening Star," the whole of which, with this exception, he afterwards wrote, as the title originally intimated, in "York Castle."

In the country the devastation was no less sudden and terrible. Mr. Hamilton's sugar-works, being above seventy feet long, were totally destroyed, with all the stores they contained. His elegant new mansion, which was built upon pillars, was lifted up by the wind and removed to some distance; but being very well put together, did not go to pieces, but was only put out of square. Mrs. Hamilton fainted away and hurt her face in the fall; but two ladies, and five children, who were in the house at the time, suffered little or nothing. Mr. Hamilton happened to be absent, and not knowing what had occurred, went home in the dark; but in seeking the door fell over the rubbish that was left upon the spot, and hurt himself so much that he was confined for a week. My wife had a violent fever; and three days before this took place, the physician visited her twice a day. I had watched with her three nights. Our dwelling is old and out of repair, and close adjoining was an old house uninhabited, and in a ruinous condition. About eleven at night, when the storm arose to a hurricane, a great part of this old building was thrown upon our house, and we expected every moment to be buried in the ruins of both. I ran out of the house to look about me, but could see nothing for rain and lightning. Rafters and shingles were flying about in the air, and the storm soon forced me back into our dwelling. In these few minutes the rain had as thoroughly penetrated my clothes, as if I had fallen into the sea. I now carried my poor sick wife into an adjoining chamber; but though it was very firmly built, the rain beat in at all corners, so there was but one small spot where my wife could sit dry. In this situation we waited till the storm abated, and were graciously preserved from further harm, except that my wife's illness increased, and I got so

violent a cold that I did not recover within a fortnight after. As to the Mission, I have not hitherto been able to gain the attention of the town negroes. Many of them have been baptized by the Roman Catholic priest and others, though not one of them attends any public worship. I shall, therefore, direct myself in future more to the plantation negroes; and Mr. Hamilton has kindly offered to procure a horse for this purpose. Though many gentlemen promised their assistance in supporting the Mission, yet I plainly perceive that the burden will fall chiefly upon Mr. Hamilton. Some of those who subscribed the paper sent to the Synod, have left the island; others are dead. Some think that the Revolution in France has put an end to all success, and discontinue their subscriptions; others have become discouraged by the misfortunes that have befallen them lately. Some who formerly gave me pressing invitations to preach on their estates, never mention a word of it now: but our greatest grief is that we have not as yet found a single soul that seeks a Saviour."

The hurricane above mentioned, and the almost simultaneous death of the Poet's mother, are described in the following fragment:—

"My parents dwelt a little while
Upon a small Atlantic isle,
Where the poor Pagan Negro broke
His heart beneath the Christian's yoke.
Him to new life in vain they called,
By Satan more than man enthralled,
Deaf to the voice that said, 'be free!'
Blind to the light of Truth was he.
Ere long, rebellion scared the land
With noonday sword, and midnight brand;
The city from its centre burned,
Till ocean's waves the fire-flood turned:

Then came a hurricane,—as all
Heaven's arch, like Dagon's house, would fall,
And crush, 'midst one wild, wailing cry,
Earth in the ruins of the sky.
Beneath their humble cottage-roof,
By lowliness made tempest-proof,
While wind, rain, lightning raged around,
And tumbling mansions shook the ground;
While rafters through the air were borne,
And trees were from their roots uptorn;
Vessels affrighted sought the strand,
And ploughed long furrows on the land;—
My father bowed his aching head
About my mother's dying bed:
From lip to lip, from heart to heart,
Passed the few parting words—'We part!'
But echoed back, though unexpressed,
'We meet again!'—rose in each breast.
Amidst the elemental strife,
That was the brightest hour of life:
Eternity outshone the tomb,
The power of God was in the room."

—*Ex. Orig. MS.*

The severest earthly trial of the good missionary had befallen him. Under date of November 10th, 1790, he says, "With a heart deeply affected, I must inform you, that it has pleased the Lord to take my dear wife home to eternal rest, on the 23rd. of October. Her illness was a fever, which lasted seven days. In the beginning no danger was apprehended; but on the fifth day the physican expressed some fears. I asked her whether she was going to leave me alone in this island? She replied, 'Indeed I should wish to remain longer with you, knowing how much you want my assistance; but, the Lord's will be done.' I then said, 'But if it should please Him to call you home, can you go with

full confidence into His presence as a ransomed sinner, and are you assured that He will graciously receive?' 'O yes,' said she, without any hesitation, 'He indeed knows my weakness and unworthiness; but He knows also that my whole reliance is upon His death and merits, by which I, poor sinful creature, have been redeemed, and I am assuredly convinced that I shall be with Him alway, &c.' This conversation we had in the evening of the 21st, and I rejoiced the more to have heard this declaration, as the violence of the fever soon brought on delirium. She thought herself in perfect health, and frequently declared that she felt not the least pain; however, she took her medicine patiently, and lay quiet. The 23rd at noon she lost her speech, and at three o'clock fell gently asleep in Jesus, during a prayer which I offered up, more with tears than words. Mr. Hamilton and the minister of the Church of England were present; and the minister exclaimed, '*God is truly present here!*' Mr. Hamilton immediately desired me not to trouble myself about the burial, for he would take care of every thing. This he did in the most generous and liberal manner. As there is no regular churchyard here, but all are buried upon their own estates, her remains were interred in a corner of our garden. A pretty numerous company attended, and the minister read the Church of England service at the grave. Every thing was conducted with great solemnity and propriety. My dear late wife was just turned of forty-eight, and we had lived twenty-two years in the married state. Of four children given to us three sons are still living. She is now at rest, but her great gain is a heavy loss to me. May the Lord our Saviour comfort me! He is my only refuge; and I confess, to His praise, I feel His presence and peace in an abundant degree. As to futurity, I commit myself

and the Mission in this island into His gracious direction and care.

"JOHN MONTGOMERY."

This Christian missionary now stood alone, and in a distant land. The very signing of his solitary name, which had always previously been associated with that of his beloved Mary in his letters, would remind him of his loss. The worthy couple had lived together in fond affection, and their hearts had clung still closer in their late calamity. She had been to him like a never-clouded star, shedding joy and consolation on all his hours; and now it was his solace, that although death's dark shadow had passed over her on earth, she would reappear with undimmed beauty in another hemisphere. He felt a consecrated power in the exercise of faith, which gained additional strength in these trying circumstances; and when the outward signs of grief, sighing and tears, had somewhat passed away, religion and its effects appeared calm and beautiful, like the moon saddening the solemnity of night, but with that sadness mingling nothing but the breath of undisturbed peace. No memorial marks the grave of this female evangelist; nor do her ashes repose in consecrated ground: a spot is traditionally pointed out, in what was the little garden attached to the temporary and enforced residence of the missionary, where it is believed her body rests; her husband "thus taking possession, though 'hoping against hope,' of the land where he had sojourned with her as a stranger for a few months only."

What this truly good man had thus communicated relative to his beloved partner in life, another person had soon to communicate respecting him. In a letter from Barbadoes, dated July 5th, 1791, written by Mr.

John Fritz, we read, "Our dear brother, John Montgomery, arrived with us on the 13th of March from Tobago, very much weakened by a violent dysentery, which baffled all efforts to restore his health, though all possible means were used; and on the 27th of June the Lord was pleased to call him hence, to rest with Him for ever. He fell happily asleep, as a ransomed sinner, rejoicing in God his Saviour, upon whose atonement he rested all his hopes, and now seeth Him face to face in whom he believed, and of whose cross and death he bore many testimonies before whites and blacks. A great number of both attended his funeral on the 28th, though the day was rainy. You may easily believe that our late brother's illness, which lasted sixteen weeks, put us to no small inconvenience. The room in which the negroes meet was the only place in which we could lodge him, and we have no other dining-room. At present no other arrangement is practicable. My assistant, brother Haman, has been very ill of a dangerous complaint, but is now on the mending hand." *

This account, which seems rather frigid in its close, and is given something in the way in which an old warrior, who has been accustomed to scenes of death, would relate the loss of a man from the ranks, was sufficient to satisfy the minds of the orphan children of the Christian exit of their honoured father. A grove of tamarind trees marks the missionary's grave in the burying-ground connected with the old station called *Sharon*, in St. Thomas's parish, Barbadoes; but whether planted before or since his interment, we are not aware. Anxious to ascertain whether there was any monument erected on the spot, a note of inquiry was addressed to W. Mallalieu, Esq., who visited all the Brethren's

* Period. Accounts, p. 72—79.

Mission Stations in the West Indies some years ago. He informs us that there are no buildings on the Sharon station at present; "but the burial-ground is still fenced in by trees. The tropical vegetation has completely hidden all trace of tombstone—if there ever was any. It is a pretty secluded spot, at some distance from the high road."

The Mission at Tobago, after the death of Mr. John Montgomery, was suspended till 1799, when, at the request and under the auspices of Mr. Hamilton, it was renewed. But, owing to the death of that gentleman and a variety of other circumstances, the island was abandoned in 1803, and this is numbered by Mr. J. Holmes among the "unsuccessful missions" of the United Brethren.* This Mission cost at least two lives, for Mr. and Mrs. Montgomery were, to all human appearance, sacrificed in its behalf.

The memorial of such parents is worthy of being handed down to posterity with any record of such a son as the Moravian Bard: although denied the advantage of having their example before his eyes, yet to their counsels and to their prayers he doubtless owed much. With great feeling have we heard him advert to his parents, when pleading the cause of the heathen in public meetings; and, as if to apologise for his appearance on a platform among regularly officiating ministers, to add weight to his remarks, and to evince his deep sense of the obligations under which he was laid, exclaiming, "*I am the* SON *of a* MISSIONARY!" Far, however, from being contracted in his views or his aid, he has been heard with no less vehemence to exclaim, "I know but of ONE *Mission*—the Mission of the Son of God—the propagation of our common Christianity

* Holmes's Historical Sketches, p. 463.

through the world, by Christian Missionaries of every denomination!" And hence, as we shall hereafter see, he lent his pecuniary aid, as well as his talents and influence, to Churchmen, Methodists, Baptists, Independents, and Moravians.

A mind like Montgomery's must have been deeply affected with these tidings of the death of his parents; nor was it likely that he would ultimately suffer them to be forgotten in the silence of the grave. Accordingly, he thus alludes to the subject in his "Departed Days:"—

"The loud Atlantic ocean,
On Scotland's rugged breast,
Rocks with harmonious motion
His weary waves to rest,
And gleaming round her emerald isles,
In all the pomp of sunset smiles.
On that romantic shore
My parents hail'd their first-born boy,
A mother's pangs a mother bore,
My father felt a father's joy:
My father, mother,—parents now no more!
Beneath the lion-star they sleep,
Beyond the western deep,
And when the sun's noon-glory crests the waves,
He shines without a shadow on their graves.

* * * *

"Sweet seas and smiling shores!
When no tornado-demon roars,
Resembling that celestial clime,
Where with the Spirits of the Blest,
Beyond the hurricane of Time,
From all their toils my parents rest:
There skies, eternally serene,
Diffuse ambrosial balm

Through sylvan isles for ever green,
O'er seas for ever calm;
While saints and angels, kindling in his rays,
On the full glory of the Godhead gaze,
And taste and prove, in that transporting sight,
Joy without sorrow, without darkness light."

CHAP. X.

1791—1792.

MONTGOMERY SEES AND ANSWERS AN ADVERTISEMENT OF A SITUATION AT SHEFFIELD. — GOES INTO THE FAMILY OF MR. GALES, IN THAT TOWN. — ACCOMPANIES HIS MASTER TO SELL A LIBRARY OF BOOKS AT ASHFORD. — IMPLICIT CONFIDENCE IN HIS INTEGRITY. — ROBERTS. — BARNARD, "POET-LAUREATE OF SHEFFIELD." — MASON. — DIBDIN. — TEGG. — GALES'S AT ECKINGTON. — POET MEETS WITH EBENEZER RHODES. — POLITICS. — RETROSPECT.

THE year in which Montgomery attained his majority was destined to be remembered as one of the most important in the history of his life, marking, as it does, the period of his settlement in that sphere of labour, influence, and respectability, which was only circumscribed by the duration of his existence on earth.

He was one day at Great Houghton, near Barnsley, collecting, as usual, the weekly accounts of Mr. Hunt, when he took up the "Sheffield Register," a newspaper published by Mr. Gales, and read in it the following advertisement: — "Wanted, in a Counting-house, in Sheffield, A CLERK. None need apply but such as have been used to Book-keeping, and can produce undeniable testimonials of character. Terms and specimens of writing to be left with the printer." *

This was a situation that accorded so exactly with Montgomery's notions and necessities at the moment, that he immediately wrote a letter to the advertiser,

* "Sheffield Register," March 2. 1792.

containing some account of himself, and serving also as a specimen of his hand-writing*, at the same time soliciting the place. Gales sent for him to Sheffield; and the interview resulted in an engagement on trial, to commence with the the first week in April, 1792.

Joseph Gales, of Sheffield, in imitation of his old master Tomlinson, of Newark, combined the vocations of printer, bookseller, and auctioneer — an arrangement far from unusual at that time; and, oddly enough, it was in connection with the last-named branch of his employer's business that Montgomery's service began. Gales, having a large sale of books, &c., at the residence of the Rev. John Bullock, at Cliff End, Ashford-in-the-Water, near Bakewell, sent for Montgomery to go with him thither in the capacity of clerk. He accordingly went on the 19th of March, 1792, the first of the five days of sale; and we have heard him mention the regret with which he saw "Parson Bullock's old folios pass through his hands without being able to read more of them than their titles,"† and, as a proof of the confiding simplicity of his employer, the fact, that he, a young man almost unknown, was left night after night in that

* His penmanship at this period chiefly differed from that of a later date in being more stiff and formal. In the letter alluded to, he wrote in a large flourishing character the words "GOD SAVE THE KING," an indication of youthful loyalty, at the sight of which Mrs. Gales laughed heartily, and which even now seems a somewhat odd prelude to the fact that, within three short years, he who wrote and he who received the sentiment were both implicated in charges of sedition!

† There were two other libraries sold by Gales, which we have heard Montgomery say he should like to have rummaged over, viz., Mr. Greenway's, of the Manor-House at Dronfield, Sept. 17., in the same year, and Mr. Newton's, at Norton — the "Squire Newton," who figures so conspicuously in one of the stories of Plumer Ward's "Human Life."

lonely house * with the proceeds of each day's sale in his charge, while Mr. Gales went over to his wife at Buxton: added to this, the nervousness which he not unnaturally felt when, at the close of the auction, he left the house, traversed the hills of the "High Peak," and slept with a strange bed-fellow at Bakewell, with between three and four hundred golden guineas in his pocket! In the inn, he noticed a prospectus of the "Looker-On," by Mr. Roberts, a gentleman whom Montgomery recognised, fifty years afterwards, as respectably connected with the literature of the age. † On the 2nd of April he came finally to reside at Sheffield, where, with the exception of his master, he knew not the face, much less enjoyed the friendship, of a single individual —

> "All else that breathed below the circling sky,
> Were linked to earth by some endearing tie;—
> He only, like the ocean weed uptorn,
> And loose along the world of waters borne,
> Was cast, companionless, from wave to wave,
> On life's rough sea—and there was none to save."

Indeed, he remarked publicly, in 1845, that there was not probably a more solitary being than himself to be found in the town, on the dark Sunday evening, when he crossed the Ladies' Bridge, and walked up the market-place, towards his untried home in the bosom of the kind family which then received him. It is almost impossible to record the first arrival of Mont-

* Every visitor to Ashford must have noticed this house, so beautifully situated under the hill side, near the margin of the Wye, and covered in front with a fine mantle of ivy. It is only a few hundred yards from the celebrated black marble mine, and the works at which the material is wrought into a variety of elegant articles.

† Author of "Life of Hannah More," "History of Letter-Writing," &c.

gomery, under the circumstances indicated, in a place where he was thereafter so long and so largely to act an important part, without contrasting the Sheffield of 1792 with the Sheffield of 1854. While the town did not cover one-third of its present area, its inhabitants were not more than one-fourth of their present number; to the three or four churches then existing, a score have been added; of the crowd of steam-engine chimneys which at this day rise in every direction, like the minarets of an eastern city, not more than one or two were visible at that time; and although the last vestige of the ancient castle had just been removed, a coppice of oak scrub, and an ivied tower at the manor-house, still remained of the ancient scenery of "The Park." On the first Sunday after his residence, the stranger was taken to "Ladies' Walk," then a pleasant and favourite promenade of the inhabitants, now one of the dingiest and dirtiest of suburban streets. On the following Sunday he went to look at Broomhall, the pleasant residence of "Justice Wilkinson," which had recently been attacked by a riotous mob, who had

> "Scared his rooks,
> Destroyed his books,
> And set his stacks on fire."

Mr. Gales lived not in one of the main streets, but in the more open part of a busy thoroughfare, called "The Hartshead." The shop, however, was commodious, and the frontage, at that time considered handsome, included a highly ornamental pair of bow windows, the first, we believe, which had then been seen in the town: he had three young children, Joseph, Thomas, and Sarah.

It would doubtless have been highly advantageous to Montgomery in every respect, had he found, on his

arrival in Sheffield, and associated himself with, members of the Moravian community; but, with a single exception*, none such were to be found. Mr. Gales and his family attended the Unitarian chapel †, and thither their inmate occasionally went with them: on the Sunday evening he sometimes dropped into the Methodist chapel. On the whole, however, we are afraid his attendance at a place of worship was by no means so constant at this time as it had been at Fulneck.

The father, mother, and three sisters of Mr. Gales at this time resided — where, indeed, they were born — at Eckington, a pleasant village about six miles south of Sheffield ‡: thither Montgomery often walked, either

* This was the widow of Mr. Creswick, the owner of a paper-mill at Brightside, near Sheffield. She was a clever woman of business, and at her house Montgomery, and any of the Brethren who happened to visit the town, were in the habit of calling. On leaving Sheffield, Mrs. C. went to reside near the Moravian chapel at Ockbrook, in a house which she left to the Brethren there.

† The preachers who occupied the pulpit about the period alluded to, are thus characterised by a friendly pen: — "In his youth"—the youth of the writer's father—"Mr. Dickinson and Mr. Evans were the ministers, who used phrases which were relics of orthodoxy, though meaning nothing, or next to nothing, as used by them. More were dropped when Mr. Naylor became the sole minister in 1798; and under Dr. Philipps the congregation at Sheffield ranked itself under the term *Unitarian*."—Hunter's *Gens Sylvestrina*, p. 183.

‡ The living of Eckington—a rich rectory—was held by Dr. Griffith, who died in 1765; — along with it, he held two or three other valuable incumbencies, which often led to severe reflections on his character as a pluralist. He was, indeed, said to be the original of a celebrated caricature, which represents a burly clergyman in a prone position, with his hands on two churches, his feet on two others, and his mouth agape at a fifth! But this may have been a slander, as well as a story current at Eckington, to the effect, that when the rebels were approaching Derby in 1745, the Doctor thought proper to preach a loyal sermon on the words, "The wicked flee when no man pursueth, but the righteous are bold

alone, or with the young ladies—the road lying mostly amidst pleasant fields, or through little hamlets, where, at that time, the Hallamshire sickle-makers manufactured, during the winter, those widely reputed implements in the using of which they commonly joined their rural neighbours in the harvest season. It was on one of these country walks, that Montgomery first met with the late Ebenezer Rhodes, the author of "Peak Scenery," and whose name will frequently occur in these pages.

Soon after Montgomery's domiciliation in Mr. Gales's family, he had pointed out to him the fugitive compositions of a local Quaker poet, Robert Barnard, who had published some lines descriptive of Sheffield, which were more striking than complimentary: for instance, he described, and not untruly, the atmosphere of the town as so charged with smoke rising from the chimneys of numerous manufactories, that

> "The sun at noon hangs in his azure field,
> Dull, red, and glowing like a copper shield."

With less justice he said of the countenances of the fair sex—

> "Should Venus give the promise of a rose,
> The breath of Vulcan blasts it ere it blows;
> Roots up the lily from its native bed,
> And plants the sickly crocus in its stead."

as a lion;' in the midst of his delivery of which, a rumour being hastily brought into the church that the Pretender was near at hand, parson and people afforded a prompt and practical illustration of the first part of the text by suddenly running off as fast as they could! We have heard Montgomery tell both stories, but always with the accompaniment of a doubt, and always, also, with an added expression of thankfulness to two grand-daughters of the Rev. Doctor, who left between them legacies amounting to more than 1,000*l.* to the Sheffield General Infirmary.

There was little, however, about this "poet-laureate of Sheffield," as he called himself, to excite either the curiosity or provoke the emulation of the new-comer: but it was far otherwise with regard to another living member of the *chori vatum*. About six miles from Sheffield resided at this time the poet Mason, at his rectory of Aston, a spot still adorned with memorials of the visit of Gray, and other evidences of the taste of the author of the "English Garden." Montgomery was very anxious to have seen Mason—"a real living poet, who had published a volume:" a gratification, however, which he never enjoyed. He soon learnt also that his own introduction into the family of Mr. Gales was not the first instance of *their* intimacy with a living poet. In 1787–8 Charles Dibdin, the once popular song writer, visited Sheffield, in the course of that professional tour which he made through the provinces after the failure of his theatrical projects in London, and before he became so popular through his "Sea-songs." He spent some weeks at the village of Eckington with the parents and sisters of Mr. Gales, of whom he invariably speaks in terms of gratitude and respect.*

* Mr. Gales printed the "Musical Tour of Mr. Dibdin; in which, previous to his embarkation for India, he finished his career as a Public Character." 1788. The volume is a handsome quarto of more than four hundred pages. It is in the form of a series of letters, which, abating the swearing, are many of them entertaining enough. The author's style is throughout most querulous, egotistical, and verbose; and his estimate of all persons and all places is in accordance with *their* estimate of his "Readings and Music;" indeed, this feeling sometimes leads him into most amusing sallies of vituperation and personality. The ground of this ill-feeling is found in the fact, that his *Entertainment* was almost every where unsuccessful, which need not be wondered at, unless the matter, as represented in the Tour, was greatly set off by the vocal and instrumental accompaniments of the performer; the verses, although

He was visited by Mason, with whom, at Aston rectory, he dined once or twice.

Soon after Montgomery's settlement at Sheffield, there came to solicit employment with Mr. Gales, as a

better than the prose, afford not the slightest earnest of those patriotic songs, naval and military, which even yet embalm the name of the author; nor was Partridge, the almanack-maker, more annoyed by the persistency of Swift, in writing him *dead*, than Dibdin was indignant to have to encounter doubts or denials of his personal identity: individuals who had seen or heard him on the London stage refused to believe that the (as they alleged) man who could not fill a small room in a provincial town was "the Mr. Dibdin, whom all the world knows, the composer of *The Padlock*, and *The Jubilee*, and *Poor Vulcan*, and *The Quaker*, and all those other charming pieces we have been delighted with." The following is at once complimentary to the Sheffield printer, and illustrative of the errant author: — "Of Mr. Gales I scarcely know how to speak. He is the printer of this work: if, therefore, I should use slight language, it will look like a compact between us; and if I am lavish in my praises of him, some may be apt to quote Shakspeare, and say 'a little flattery sometimes does well.' I should, therefore, feel myself awkwardly situated but for one circumstance, which has *major*, MINOR, and CONCLUSION in its favour, as *clearly* as any problem in EUCLID. *Before* I ever saw Mr. GALES, I had received numberless civilities at the hands of different *printers*, from many of whom I had offers to print my TOUR; *after* I knew Mr. GALES, I preferred him to all the printers I had seen. Thus I am enabled, by a self-evident circumstance, to express my sentiments as strongly as by trying my hand at a studied panegyrick; which, had I done in the sort of style my wishes led me to, I should have been obliged to have enjoined Mr. GALES's foreman to have printed it unknown to his master; for so diffident is he of his own worth, that I should never have prevailed on him to let that issue from the press which would have been as great a credit to the public as anything that ever did pass through it. Another circumstance will by and by oblige me to speak in Mr. *Gales's* favour, in spite of his teeth. Among my general subjects, it will be very proper to take up newspapers; in which case it would be very *improper* not to mention the "Sheffield Register" with that degree of praise it deserves." — *Tour*, p. 206.

bookbinder, "a fine-looking young man, with extraordinary eyebrows," who called himself Johnson, and had been employed by Spence, of York. It afterwards turned out that the real name of this individual, who soon left Sheffield, was Tegg — the poet always believing him to be the same person afterwards so well known as a London bookseller.*

It may also be mentioned, that he accidentally saw at this period a poem, the author of which was destined to take no mean rank in that "living choir" whose songs presently charmed the new century, and nearly the whole of whom he outlived. Among the compositors in Mr. Gales's printing office was one who had been engaged in "setting up" the matter of the first edition of Rogers's "Pleasures of Memory," the proof sheets of which, in quarto size, he had with him. In this shape Montgomery first read an exquisite work, the quiet and varied beauties of which he probably learnt to admire more, after his own taste and judgment had become more matured and chastened than they were at this early and enthusiastic period of his life. This "press copy" had no author's name; and all that its owner knew on that subject was the rumour, in the London establishment where he had worked, that the poem was written by "one Parson Harrison!"

Holland: "Do you remember anything of Count Zenobia, who visited Sheffield about the time of your arrival there, and intermeddled, as a liberal partisan, with the politics of the day?" *Montgomery:* "Yes; he was, I believe, a Venetian nobleman: he was a smart little

* Montgomery lived to verify this opinion. Mr. Tegg died April 21. 1846, aged seventy; and, in a brief notice of his enterprising and successful career, which was published in various newspapers at that time, his employment in the office of Mr. Gales was distinctly mentioned.

personage, with a Napoleon nose. Mr. Gales printed for him an 'Address to the People of England, on the part their Government ought to act in the present war between the combined armies of Austria and Prussia, and the armed mob of France.'"

We have not yet had occasion even to allude to politics—a subject with which almost the whole of Montgomery's life, from this point, may be said to have been identified. It might, indeed, well be asked—What could a young man, brought up in the seclusion of the country, and almost wholly given to verse-making, know about the operation of those principles upon which the right government of his own country, and the maintenance of its relation to other countries, depends? We should be tempted to answer—nothing at all; did we not recollect what apt pupils men usually become, when their passions and their interests are enlisted on the side of their studies. At this period the French Revolution was just at its height,—the tragical execution of the King and Queen took place in France: and in this country, many persons who did not dare to advocate such a consummation of their hatred to royalty, were not averse to referring to that tremendous catastrophe, as an argument for great governmental changes in England. The Jacobins—as the whole class of political doctrinists were popularly designated—entertained views more or less extreme, according to circumstances: some were enamoured of the ancient heathen republics, and appealed, in their arguments, to classical authorities; others, more practical, had an eye on the young democracies of the United States; a few were content to refer to the natural capabilities of the British Constitution for yielding, without actual danger or essential change, to the demand for those improvements which

time had rendered necessary. By far the greater proportion, however, were more or less affected with the French mania; and, as a sympathy between the malcontents on both sides of the water was strong and avowed, the danger of mischief, from this source at least, was proportionately imminent. Thus the movement of the time embraced, collectively, all sorts of alterations in the existing system of government, from simple reform to downright revolution. To which point on this scale the political conduct and opinions of Mr. Gales were most truly referable, the reader shall presently be enabled to judge for himself. Meanwhile, the following remarks on this period, and on the character of his old master in relation to it, calmly written, as they were, by Montgomery himself, when taking a retrospective view of his entrance upon the stage of public life, will be read with interest.

"I came to Sheffield in the spring of 1792, a stranger, and friendless, without any intention or prospect of making a long residence in it, much less of advancing myself, either by industry or talents, to a situation that should give me the opportunity of doing much evil or much good, as I might act with indiscretion or temperance. The whole nation, at that time, was disturbed from its propriety by the example and influence of revolutionised France; nor was there a district in the kingdom more agitated by the passions and the prejudices of the day than this. The people of Sheffield, in whatever contempt they may have been held by supercilious censors, ignorant of their character, were then, as they are now, and as I hope they ever will be, a reading and a thinking people. According to the knowledge which they had, therefore, they judged for themselves on the questions of reform in parliament, liberty of speech, and of the press, the

rights of man, and other egregious paradoxes, concerning which the wisest and best of men have always been divided, and never were more so than at the period above mentioned, when the decision, either way, was not to be merely speculative, but practical, and to affect permanently the condition of all classes of persons in the realm, from the monarch to the pauper,—so deep, comprehensive, and prospective was the view taken by every body, on the issue of the controversy. The two parties, in Sheffield, as elsewhere, arrayed themselves on the contrary extremes; some being for every thing that was old, the rest for every thing that was new. There was no moderation on either side; each had a little of the truth, while the main body of it lay between; yet it was not for *this* that they were contending (like the Trojans and Greeks for the body of Patroclus), but for those few dissevered limbs which they already possessed.

"It was at 'the height of this great argument' that I was led into the thickest of the conflict, though, happily for myself, under no obligation to take an active share in it. With all the enthusiasm of youth —for I had not then arrived at what are called years of discretion—I entered into the feelings of those who avowed themselves the friends of freedom, justice, and humanity. Those with whom I was immediately connected, verily were such; and had all the reformers of that era been generous, upright, and disinterested, like the noble-minded proprietor of the "Sheffield Register," the cause which they espoused would never have been disgraced, and might have prevailed, even at that time, since there could have been nothing to fear, and all to hope, from patriotic measures supported by patriotic men. Though with every pulse of my heart beating in favour of the popular doctrines, my retired

and religious education had laid restraints upon my conscience — I may say so fearlessly — which long kept me back from personally engaging in the civil war of words then raging through the neighbourhood; beyond an occasional rhyme, paragraph, or essay, in the newspaper, written rather for the purpose of showing my literary than my political qualifications. Ignorant of myself, and inexperienced in the world as a child of seven years old — having actually not lived so long among its every-day inhabitants, even when I became the Editor of the "Iris" — I nevertheless was preserved from joining myself to any of the political societies till they were broken up in 1794, when I confess I did associate with the remnant of one for a purpose which I shall never be ashamed to avow — to support the families of several of the accused leaders, who were detained prisoners in London, under the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act, and were finally discharged without having been brought to trial."

CHAP. XI.

1792—1793.

THE "SHEFFIELD REGISTER."—ITS CHARACTER.—MRS. GALES WRITES IN IT.—A NOVEL FROM HER PEN.—POLITICAL EXCITEMENT IN SHEFFIELD.—BARRACKS.—RECRUITING PARTIES.—REFORM MEETING ON CASTLE HILL.—MR. GALES PRESIDES AT IT.—FOUNDATION OF THE GENERAL INFIRMARY.—CHURCH AND WARMING-PAN.—MONTGOMERY'S "CHALLENGE."—CONDUCT OF HIS ADVERSARY.—NORTHALL PUBLISHER OF THE "SHEFFIELD COURANT."—ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF COLONEL BOSVILLE.—SONNET.

THE quotation at the close of the preceding chapter describes with equal frankness, simplicity, and fidelity, the position and views of Montgomery, on his first contact with the perilous influences and responsibilities of political journalism.

The "Sheffield Register" advocated parliamentary reform and popular rights in plain and fearless terms; at the same time it was open to correspondents of all shades of opinion. In the number for February 1. 1792, appeared an article signed J. M., in which the writer says, "For myself (and I do not think that I am speaking the solitary sentiments of an individual only), I have no hesitation in declaring that I have never been friendly, even in thought, to the exclusive application of republican maxims in government. I do not go the length of those who declaim against a republic as the worst of governments in the ancient or modern world! But I confess I see nothing that an Englishman has to envy in the comparative condition of man-

kind, in the more splendid periods of Greek and Roman greatness; nor do I think that the examples of our own age promise to afford more persuasive arguments in its favour. It is a mode of government well calculated, indeed, to call forth the exertions and display the energies of the human intellect, and, as such, highly flattering to the genius and ambition of particular men. But who would infer from this that it is more likely to promote public felicity? I think with those who consider the state of manners in Europe as too depraved to admit of being regulated by any means short of strong coercion; and as the executive power of government must be lodged somewhere, is it not better that it should be exercised in any one regular, permanent, and uniform manner, than ever varying its temper, and left to fluctuate from the hand of one demagogue to another, whether he be the successful general at the head of an army, or the leading orator of a popular assembly?"

These are nervous and sensible expressions, but they also indicate a writer of years and experience; and it is probably only by accident that they bear the initials of our young reformer, whose ostensible connection with the paper had not then commenced; nor do we meet with any other contribution to the "Register" to which that signature is attached, during the remainder of the year, though several paragraphs appear to be the productions of the same pen. Many of these, however, were written by Mrs. Gales, a lady of some taste and talent*, who rendered her husband efficient

* Mrs. Gales wrote a novel, in three volumes, entitled "Lady Emma Melcombe," for the copyright of which Robinson, of Paternoster Row, gave her twenty-five guineas. But she ventured beyond newspaper paragraphs and other light and fugitive literature,

assistance in the conduct of the paper, and whose conversations and kindness had no inconsiderable influence in the formation of Montgomery's character at this period.

But whether Montgomery had or had not as yet imbibed a taste for, or tried his hand at, political writing, he was not likely long to withstand the influence of the scenes and circumstances by which he was surrounded. The very first year of his residence in Sheffield was marked by the hasty erection of barracks for the accommodation of 200 cavalry; and the twenty-first anniversary of his own birthday, Nov. 4.—unnoticed in reference to himself—was distinguished by a public dinner at the Tontine Hotel, in commemoration of the Revolution of 1688. At the beginning of 1793, the period comprised in this chapter, there were not fewer than thirty recruiting parties in the town, engaged in enlisting men for the anticipated war with France, the formal declaration of which, in the month of August, "gave," says the local historian, "such a check to the commerce of the town, as occasioned gloom and dismay to overspread every class of its population."* On the 8th of April, a large public meeting was held on the Castle Hill, Mr. Gales in the chair, when it was resolved, "That a reform in the representation of the people in Parliament is necessary for the peace and happiness of the country; and that a petition be presented to the House of Commons, praying for the thorough reform thereof." This petition was introduced on the 6th of May; and, after a long and spirited discussion,

having been, as her sister-in-law told us, the writer of many of the notes in a folio edition of the Bible, which was published by Mr. Gales.

* Hunter's Hallamshire, p. 128.

rejected, as containing expressions disrespectful to the House. Amidst the records of a period thus distracted with sounds of martial music and the strife of noisy political debate, it is a relief to find that the "still small voice" of charity was neither uttered nor heard in vain. On the 4th of September, the first stone of the Sheffield General Infirmary, "for the sick and lame poor of all nations," was laid by Mr. Swallow, as the representative of Mrs. Fell, of New Hall, the donor of 1,000*l.* The public officers of the town were present, and so was Montgomery, as a humble spectator of the ceremony; and he was, perhaps, of the 20,000 individuals on the ground, the least likely person at that time, either in the opinion of himself or others, ever to occupy, as he afterwards did for many years, the president's chair at the Weekly Board of Management of that noble institution.

About this time, our author wrote, and printed in the newspaper, a humorous story, entitled the "History of a Church and a Warmingpan." The prototype of this *jeu-d'esprit* was Sterne's "History of a Good Warm Watchcoat"—a story sufficiently entertaining to a reader who neither knows nor cares anything about its original esoteric significance: not so its counterpart, the "History of a Church and a Warmingpan"*—one of the most crude and early fruits of its author's genius, and which would scarcely deserve to be mentioned here, had it not been surreptitiously reprinted and industriously circulated more than once, many years afterwards, by an unprincipled party who

* A century earlier, the title of this squib might have had a popular signification; for at the time of the Sacheverell riots, and while plots were going on in favour of the Pretender, *Church and Warmingpan* were notable party catchwords.—Wright's *House of Hanover*, vol. i. p. 34.

sought in vain to annoy Mr. Montgomery by sneering at his piety.

The object of the author was, by means of a harsh and ludicrous parable, to illustrate the necessity of ecclesiastical and political reform. The story is of a dilapidated village church, for the repairs of which repeated collections were made on a Sunday in a "warming-pan," and spent at the alehouse in the course of the week! A member of the congregation makes a speech in reprobation of such a procedure; towards the close of which he says:—"Notwithstanding what has passed, the church must be repaired, and the constitution of our country regenerated. But how must these great ends be accomplished? By an equal representation of the people in Parliament, and of this village in a committee: a parliament composed of the best and wisest men in these realms—a committee of the most honest and upright men in this village: and these can only be chosen properly, by collecting the votes of every individual whose head can boast of common sense, and his heart of common honesty."

This composition, reprehensible as it is, as a whole, in almost every point of view, contains the following anti-polemical rhapsody: it is the counterpart of the Sonnet presently to be quoted, and shows how consistently Montgomery opposed war from the very outset of his political career:—"War is but gigantic murder!—the grim idol adored by tyrants and their titled slaves. The globe is his altar—man his victim; his mouth is famine, his breath pestilence, his look death, and his footsteps graves! Even now, his exterminating arm is hewing down, without distinction, the tallest and fairest cedars of Europe, as fuel for his sacrifices: and the British oak itself, groaning to the redoubling strokes of his axe, nods hourly over a broader and a blacker shadow,

prophetic of — save, save my country, Heaven! — a fall."

In the course of this and the following year he wrote several fugitive pieces, apparently in imitation of the style of the notorious "Peter Pindar;" and, if there were any merit in having succeeded in these efforts, we might claim for Montgomery that distinction. The articles, however, as well those in prose as those in verse, to which we here allude, were among those unripe fruits of his youthful imagination, which were so bitter to his remembrance in after life; and in reference to which he once observed to us, with the most poignant feeling, "that he had been one of the greatest fools that ever obtruded himself on the public notice." Tears of repentance, as honourable to the man as they were becoming in the Christian, were afterwards shed for these "sins of his youth;" and though they could not obliterate sentiments to which words had given "all but immortality," they were the proofs of sincere contrition, doubtless acceptable to HIM to whose service James Montgomery afterwards so eminently and entirely devoted himself. These remarks are here made once for all, and apply to several other articles in prose and rhyme, written about this period.

In October, appeared an "Elegy to the Memory of the late Colonel Bosville, who fell in the action near Lincelles," previous to the battle of Dunkirk. The subject of this little piece was proposed to Montgomery by a person of the name of Brown, a local attorney and a noisy politician. To this man he gave a copy of the verses, and allowed him to extort a promise that they should not be published, at least for some weeks. After a time the Elegy appeared in the "Sheffield Register;" and immediately a letter, written by the Hon. Mrs. Murray, daughter of "old Lord Murray" of Banner

Cross, was received by Mr. Gales, rating him somewhat severely for printing as Montgomery's, verses which had been written for and presented to her by Mrs. Brown. Our poet was not slow in writing to Lady Murray, claiming the authorship, and giving the history of his own composition. Presently afterward, her ladyship sent to Montgomery, accompanied by a polite letter, two copies of irregular stanzas of her own composition, on the death of Colonel Bosville, between whom and herself, it appears, there had existed some sort of attachment. These verses, in conformity with a particular desire, our poet revised and returned—a service which she never in any way acknowledged. As the fervour with which her ladyship, then a married woman, and noted for her beauty, spoke of the gallant officer, who was a married man, somewhat surprised Montgomery, it is very likely he took certain liberties with the pieces not compatible with the taste of the writer, though, to use his own expression, he "fanned, where he found it, any glimmering spark of sentiment into a flame, and only blew away the ashes."

In the "Register" of December 20th, an advertisement appeared, announcing "A Challenge," and signed "James Montgomery." Let not the reader start—it portended a bloodless duel; although the aggressor might not unreasonably have calculated upon more serious consequences. Some anonymous individual had written four lines, reflecting (we believe) on the character of Mr. Gales; and to this tetrastic, which was inserted in the "Courant" newspaper*, he had, with a dastardly disingenuousness, affixed the signature of "*Montgomericus.*" This was justly deemed an insult by him whose name was abused by this innuendo; and Montgomery sent

* The first number of which appeared June 10. 1793.

four lines in reply, signed with his initials. These, for reasons deemed satisfactory to the writer, the printer refused to insert; and here it was expected this silly affair would have ended. A few days afterwards, however, Montgomery received from the hands of a powdered gentleman, of whom he had not the least knowledge, "a *rhyming* catalogue of scurrility upon his youth, person, occupation," &c., and charging him with the double guilt of *rhyme* and *treason;* promising to "toss him in a blanket, and make his scrawling muse give up the ghost," &c. In consequence of this, Montgomery gave him, through the newspaper, a public "Challenge, to choose a subject (not political, lest it should give offence), upon which each of us," says he, "shall write an essay, either in prose or verse, whether he pleases, to be signed with our own names at full length, inserted, with the printer's leave, either in the "Register,"or the "Courant"(I leave the choice to him); and the public shall judge between us. If he does not accept this challenge, it will be because he *dare not;* and if he *dare not,* it will only be because he cannot." The only consequence, however, of this "challenge," so insidiously provoked, and so cavalierly given, was a scurrilous letter, which appeared in the "Courant," addressed to Montgomery, who, in an advertisement in the next "Register," exposed the real name of his cowardly antagonist, repeating at the same time his willingness to meet, even on a political topic, the person who had had the meanness to endeavour to give him a wound under the guise of his own signature. This skirmishing, happily, led to no engagement. Our excited poet, however, not only vented a rhyming missive at the "Laureate of the "Courant," but versified a bit of local scandal against the publisher, Northall, of which the following is the exordium:—

"O for a thousand million tongues,
And every one as loud as thunder,
With brazen throats and marble lungs,
To roar the praises of John Blunder!
Ye Muses nine, ye merry lasses,
Who dance and fiddle on Parnasses,
Descend, your poet to inspire," &c.

"Misery," says the adage, "often makes persons acquainted with strange bedfellows"—a sentiment literally exemplified in this case. Some years afterwards, when Pitt increased the duty on newspaper stamps from twopence to threepence halfpenny, Montgomery and Northall, being both interested in the measure, went from Sheffield to York, to have an interview with Mr. Gray, the stamp distributor, on the subject. "It was curious," said Montgomery, "to see Paul Positive and John Blunder, both mounted, and trotting amicably together towards York: we staid a night on the road at Great Houghton, and slept in the same bedroom. Poor Northall! he ultimately broke down, and I bought all his printing materials for 100*l.*"

A Sonnet, written by Montgomery on the close of the campaign of this eventful year, we transcribe less for the poetry than for the spirited deprecation of war which it breathes;—

"SONNET,

"*Upon the Close of the Campaign of* 1793.

"Hail, drear December, King of Tempests, hail!
Rise wrapt in horrors, armed with vengeance rise!
Round thy pale throne tormented goblins wail,
And sanguine meteors streak with blood the skies!

Grim tyrant, say, since light from darkness rose,
Was ever year before so red with crimes?
Oh, guilty year! Oh, year of murders! close,
And be abhorred, accursed by future times!

"In blood did Spring, in blood did Summer mourn,
And Autumn's reeking vintage gushed with gore;
Rather than scenes like these should yet return,
May seed and harvest time return no more;
Eternal desolation blast the plain,
And Winter—everlasting Winter, reign!"

December, 1793.

CHAP. XII.

1794.

POLITICAL SOCIETIES. — CONFLICT BETWEEN LOYAL AND DEMOCRATIC OPINIONS. — INFLUENCE OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION. — PARLIAMENTARY REFORM. — THE DUKE OF RICHMOND. — PITT. — PROVINCIAL ASSOCIATIONS. — THE "PATRIOT." — BROWN, THE DEMAGOGUE. — MUIR, SKIRVING, GERALD, AND MARGAROT. — STATE TRIALS.

The commencement of this year appeared to indicate, even more distinctly than that just closed, the approach of a crisis. The war with France, in which we were engaged, was generally unpopular: political societies, under various denominations, but all assuming to be more or less "constitutional," were formed in most large towns. Their principles were not only altogether opposed to the war, but the avowed object of most of them was also to obtain Parliamentary Reform: nor can it be denied that some of them had less prudently-defined objects. Those persons, on the other hand, who thought the war just and necessary, and dreaded the ascendancy of democratic principles, addressed the throne in the language of exclusive loyalty; and armed associations were formed, less in the expectation of having to meet a foreign enemy, than for the purpose of maintaining subordination at home. These proceedings were not witnessed without suspicion and apprehension. Those persons who admired the principles of the French Revolution, and were suspected to be the secret abettors of the introduction of a similar

experiment at home, deprecated the war as an attempt to crush the rising struggle for liberty; while, as we have before intimated, it was hardly less unpopular with the bulk of that class of the community—an important one in Sheffield—whose interests it so materially affected, viz., persons engaged in manufactures and commerce: these found stagnation and dismay taking the place of that better state of things which had preceded the commencement of hostilities.

It is not our intention to go at length into a subject to which we have already adverted, and which belongs rather to the general history of the nation and of the age, than of an individual; but we cannot, in this place, wholly pass over in silence some of those circumstances, the slightest mention of which will prepare the reader to understand with more distinctness the extraordinary scenes through which the warm-hearted and single-minded Montgomery was so soon destined to pass. The French Revolution, the leading actors in which were at first, even by many honest men, believed to be not only asserting their own rights, but also asserting and advancing the general liberties of mankind*, had displayed, as we have already intimated, such horrid scenes of anarchy, impiety, and bloodshed, that many of the very leaders among the men who had at first admired the "National Assembly," recoiled with dismay at the atrocities perpetrated in the name of Liberty. That wise and sober men in this country, from the sovereign to the day labourer, should have regarded with horror and apprehension the dissemination in the United Kingdom of those licentious principles which in France had led to the murder of the King and Queen as a proof of the popular detestation of monarchy, and to

* Life of Major Cartwright, vol. i. p. 182.

the enthronement of an infamous woman as the "Goddess of Reason" in proof of the popular abandonment of Christianity, was not surely to be wondered at. At this crisis, however, the most zealous attempts were made to inflame the people against the government, by the circulation of books on the one hand, and the holding of meetings on the other. To intimate that every individual who took part in the circulation of political tracts approved of such infamous publications as those of the author of the "Rights of Man," and others that might be named*, or that the bulk of those who met to petition for political changes were confessedly in favour of the establishment of a republic in England, would be absurd; but to assert that the very existence of the government was endangered, as well by the proceedings of those who did not formally, as by those who did avowedly, hold such views, is, we presume, only to record an historical fact.

Long before the period alluded to, however, that great question had been mooted, which afterwards formed a bond of union among the constitutional Whigs, and which, at the same time, became the watch-

* It has been publicly asserted, not only that Mr. Gales printed the "Age of Reason," but that Paine's advice led to the establishment of the "Sheffield Register." There does not, we believe, exist the shadow of a foundation for either assertion. That the Sheffield journalist entertained a degree of sympathy with the political opinions of the author of the "Rights of Man" is proved by the introduction of extracts from that work into his paper; but that there existed any kind of personal intercourse between the parties was always denied, both by the surviving sister of Mr. Gales and by Montgomery himself; and we have seen a series of letters addressed by Paine to Thomas Walker, of Masbrough, which, although relating mostly to the bridge before mentioned, contain also political remarks, but nothing to indicate any connection either with Sheffield or its newspapers.

word of every party who, from that day to this, have clamoured for wild and dangerous innovations in the state, namely, PARLIAMENTARY REFORM. During the administration of Lord North, the imperfect representation of the people in the House of Commons had been eloquently demonstrated; and in 1782 a meeting was held at the house of the Duke of Richmond, in London, at which it was determined to present a petition to Parliament on the subject. Accordingly, in the May of that year, William Pitt, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, and comparatively a young man, moved in the House of Commons, after an eloquent speech, "That a committee be appointed to examine into the present state of the representation of the commons of Great Britain in Parliament, to report the same to the House, and likewise what steps, in their opinion, it may be proper for Parliament to take concerning the same." The resolution was lost by a majority of 20; and the sincerity of the mover of it no more admits of a question than the importance of the inquiry proposed. Indeed, on the 7th of May in the following year, Pitt, then unattached to any party, again brought the business of Parliamentary Reform before the House of Commons, in three resolutions, the first of which related to bribery and expense at elections; the second to the disfranchisement of boroughs, on proof of corruption being established against them; and the third to the addition of county members and representatives of the metropolis. These resolutions were negatived by a much larger majority than the motion of the preceding year, namely, 144. As the name of Pitt was so often adverted to, both by the criminals, their counsel, and the press, in the trials for sedition which subsequently took place, as if he had once been a favourer of sentiments or conduct identical with those afterwards prosecuted

by his government, it may be proper to mention that, in the eloquent speech by which he introduced the resolutions of 1783, he desired the House of Commons not to suppose that he meant, with the mad hand of modern visionaries and speculative reformers, rashly and sacrilegiously to attempt an innovation on what our ancestors had purchased at so large an expense of treasure and blood, and which they had delivered to us as the most valuable of all trusts. He reprobated the scheme of universal suffrage, as absurd, impracticable, and not known or attempted at any period of the British history.*

In the following year he again not only declared himself friendly to Parliamentary Reform, but moved for leave to bring in a bill, the general features of which he explained: this motion, too, was rejected. With reference to his opposition to the doctrines and movements of the reformers after he had been long first minister of the crown, it is only necessary here to observe that, in addition to the growing differences of opinion as to the nature and extent of the reform required, the fact that an armed body of political reformers, the Irish volunteers, had presented a demand for triennial parliaments, at the point of the bayonet, to the Irish Parliament,—added to which, the immediate difficulties of his administration, and the appalling catastrophe of the French Revolution, which shook the foundations of every European throne, — might well induce him first to pause, and finally to resist.

But, be that as it may, the general proposition of a reform in Parliament, to which the Duke of Richmond and William Pitt had previously lent their names, both in and out of Parliament, became in 1793 the rallying

* Tomline's Life of Pitt, vol. i. p. 164.

point of those who had at first approved, as well as of many who still sympathised with, the Gallic revolutionists*; added to which, there were many persons who, belonging to neither of the foregoing classes, were nevertheless strongly opposed, on various grounds, to the war then carrying on between Great Britain and France. †

To bring these statements home to our subject, it may be remarked, that when Montgomery first entered the printing-office of Mr. Gales, at Sheffield, he found the press employed upon a small periodical, entitled the "Patriot,"‡ edited by Matthew Campbell Brown, at that period an occupant of "Godfrey Fox's parlour,"

* In fact, at this very time, or immediately afterwards—we have it on the authority of his own published journal—the noted Irish democrat, Theobald Wolf Tone, founder and leader of the "United Society of Irishmen," was in Paris, dancing a daily attendance on Citizen Carnot, the "organiser of Victory," and other members of the Executive Directory, persuading them of the practicability of a successful invasion of Ireland, and the consequent certainty of an immediate insurrection to throw off the domination of England. The result of this advice, was the futile visit of a French squadron to Bantry Bay, at Christmas, 1796; and the still more humiliating, and, as the event proved to poor Tone, fatal action off Loch Swilly, in October 1798.

† Associations for Parliamentary Reform existed as early as 1779; but in considering the nature and effects of the numerous political confraternities which were formed in every large town in the kingdom about the period of the French Revolution, generally for the ostensible purpose of obtaining Parliamentary Reform, it must be borne in mind that the parties did not seek merely such an abolition of the "rotten boroughs," and enfranchisement of the large unrepresented towns, as was contemplated by Pitt in 1782, or secured by Earl Grey's Bill of 1832; but rather that wild, impracticable, and essentially revolutionary change in the representative system still contended for by some persons — *annual parliaments* and *universal suffrage*.

‡ The first number of which appeared April 6. 1792.

i. e., the gaol. This individual, whose "Patriot" was one of the seditious books which the unfortunate Thomas Muir * was charged with circulating, and who figures so largely in connection with the documentary evidence adduced on the trials of Skirving, Gerald, Margarot, and others, was sent by the Sheffield "Constitutional Society" as a delegate to the "National Convention," held in Edinburgh November 19. 1793.† Of the fidelity of this man to the cause of the reformers, Montgomery did not, from the first, entertain a high opinion; and it was not strengthened by a reference to the facts that, while it was well known that he played so conspicuous a part in the meetings of the "Convention," he was never, in any way, called to account by the public prosecutor, nor did he ever return to Sheffield to

* The stern sentence passed on this individual startled all the patriots, who thought danger possible to themselves or their friends. Mr. Gales, writing to his friend Aston, at Manchester, says, "What think you of the fate of poor Muir? We shall no longer think anything of six, twelve, or eighteen months' imprisonment, after a transportation of fourteen years!! Good God! what can possess the people, that they cannot see these enormities. The 'Patriot,' you see, is among the proscribed works. All is yet still respecting it in this part of Britain: how long it will remain so one cannot say." — Sept. 7. 1791. Mr. Joseph Aston, whose name will henceforth often occur as the correspondent of Montgomery, was the son of a gunmaker at Manchester, a business which he himself followed previous to his entire devotion to politics and journalism. When we knew him, about twenty years afterwards, he appeared a kind and amiable man.

† Gales, speaking of the proceedings against the democrats at Edinburgh, says, "Poor Brown's is a hard fate; but his spirits are excellent — so are the spirits of all the sufferers. There is something in persecution so invigorating, that those who suffer under it never want spirits." He had soon occasion to test this doctrine in his own experience; perhaps he had forebodings, for he adds, "The present is a dark period; no *man* can penetrate the gloom!" — *Letter to Aston.*

answer for his proceedings to those who sent him to, and maintained him in, Scotland.*

One day, in 1844, Montgomery called upon Mr. Holland, who had lying before him a volume of Howell's "State Trials." *Holland:* "I am reading the trials of some of your Scottish compatriots of 1793, who were convicted of sedition, and I am entertained by the attempts which were made, as well by those of the prisoners who defended themselves as by the counsel, to prove that the punishment of 'banishing forth of the realm,' does not mean transportation.'† *Montgomery:* "Yes; so I believe Mr. Laing showed on the trial of Gerrald: do you find his speech in that volume?" *Holland:* "Yes, Sir; and a very clever one it is."

* Brown appears to have acted a sufficiently straightforward and spirited part in one place at least; for when the Lord Provost of Edinburgh entered the British Convention, on the 5th of December, 1793, after the apprehension of Margarot, Gerrald, Callender, Scott, and Ross, and insisted upon the dispersal of the meeting, Brown not only argued the propriety of his interference, but continued to occupy the chair till forced from it by the Provost. On the other hand, considering the conspicuous part thus taken by him, and the repeated mention of his name on the trials of his colleagues, it is as remarkable that he was never brought up either as a prisoner or a witness, as that he never was again heard of in Sheffield.

† The trials and conviction of these men for sedition produced considerable excitement at the time, not merely because the Scottish law was somewhat less exactly defined than the English with reference to that crime, but also because the High Court of Justiciary at Edinburgh had dealt rather with a constructive hypothesis of guilt than with the actual evidence of a proven crime. Indeed the legality of the sentence passed upon the convicts was not only questioned out of doors, but the subject was more than once discussed in both Houses of Parliament. A very full account of the proceedings on these important trials, which were on many accounts interesting, will be found in Howell's "State Trials," vol. xxiii.

Montgomery: "I should like to read it; my friend, Felix Vaughan, who was a good judge of such matters, said it was one of the best ever delivered on the subject, and advised me to read it." *Holland:* "And now, after exactly fifty years of delay, you have the opportunity of yielding to his advice. Did you ever see any of the Scotch 'leasing makers,' either before or after their conviction?" *Montgomery:* "Only two of them; when I went to London on account of Mr. Gales's bankruptcy, in 1794, I had occasion to go to Newgate to speak with Symmons and Ridgeway, the publishers, who were imprisoned for selling Paine's works, and there I saw Gerrald *, who was awaiting his transportation to New Holland, where he died soon after his arrival. I never can forget his appearance: he was then in ill health, and so slender, it seemed that you might fancy you could crush him in your hand like an egg-shell. But there was, at the same time, a fervour and an enthusiasm about him, such as I hardly ever saw in any other man: his piercing look and his quick motion suggested the idea of his being wholly spirit; he not only appeared as if he had a distinct life in every member, but actually to think all over! Margarot, the wretch! called upon me in Sheffield, after his return from transportation, in 1811, but I would not have anything to do with him." This was the only one of the Scottish convicts who returned to Great Britain. He appears, while abroad, to have conducted himself with such shameless profligacy, that his fellow transports were presently compelled to separate themselves entirely from his society in New Holland.

But to return to the general condition of the country, as indicated at the commencement of this chapter.

* He had been a favourite pupil with Dr. Parr, who exerted himself in behalf of the unhappy convict.

CHAP. XIII.

1794.

DISSEMINATION OF DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES. — POPULARITY OF THE "SHEFFIELD REGISTER." — GENERAL FAST. — MONTGOMERY'S HYMN SUNG AT A PUBLIC MEETING. — POLITICAL ASSEMBLY ON CASTLE HILL. — HENRY REDHEAD YORKE. — MONTGOMERY SUMMONED BEFORE THE MAGISTRATE, JUSTICE WILKINSON. — REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF SECRECY. — APPREHENDED DANGER TO MR. GALES. — HE ELUDES THE SEARCH FOR HIM. — LEAVES THE COUNTRY. — FAREWELL ADDRESS TO THE READERS OF THE "REGISTER."

It cannot be denied that advantage was taken at this lamentable crisis of affairs, to disseminate principles hostile to the established government, if not subversive of civil safety; and whoever reads the newspapers of that period, containing as they did, on the one hand, accounts of the operations and atrocities of the executive government of France, and, on the other, the inflammatory harangues of our own political demagogues, must wonder how it could happen that the constitution of this country should have escaped destruction. In few periodical prints were these topics discussed with greater freedom and ability, — we may add, with more honesty of purpose, — than in the "Sheffield Register;" and some estimate may be formed of its popularity, from the fact, that, on May 2nd this year, the publication reached 2025 copies.* This

* At this period, and for many years afterwards, the name of some Member of Parliament was printed on the envelope of a newspaper, with the formality of a frank, to pass post free. Up to

reciprocity of influence between the paper and the party must have been considerable on both sides, and Joseph Gales was, for some time, believed to be "a marked man."

A royal proclamation having been issued, commanding February 28th, 1794, to be observed as a General Fast, the "Friends of Peace and Reform" at Sheffield chose to honour the day after their own fashion, by holding a large public meeting, at which, after a prayer, delivered by "Billy Broomhead," and a "serious lecture," composed, but not read, by "Neddy Oakes,"* a hymn, written for the occasion by Montgomery, "was sung in full chorus" by the assembly, consisting of several thousand persons. After this, a chairman was appointed, and a series of eleven resolutions of a strong character were "unanimously passed." A description of "The Fast Day, as observed at Sheffield," was published in a pamphlet, and a copy sent to the "London Corresponding Society:" this was seized, with the other papers of the Society, on the arrest of Hardy, their Secretary, and thus, as Montgomery once said, "one of the first hymns of mine ever sung found its way into Billy Pitt's green bag,"—he might have added, "and was afterwards recited by Mr. Gibbs in the Sessions House of the Old Bailey." The evidence relative to this meeting forms a large item in the report of proceedings on Hardy's trial. The following is the hymn:—

January, 1794, the name of Mr. Wilberforce had been used on the "Sheffield Register," when it was authoritatively withdrawn, and that of Mr. (afterwards Earl) Grey substituted.

* It may be worthy of remark, that a part of the ground adjoining West Street, on which this meeting was held, was ten years afterwards occupied by one of the largest Methodist chapels in the kingdom; and in which, ten years later still, the pulpit was occupied by Mr. Oakes, at that time a respectable Wesleyan preacher.

"O God of Hosts, thine ear incline,
Regard our prayers, our cause be thine:
When orphans cry, when babes complain,
When widows weep, canst Thou refrain?

"Now red and terrible, thine hand
Scourges with war our guilty land;
Europe thy flaming vengeance feels,
And from her deep foundations reels.

"Her rivers bleed like mighty veins;
Her towers are ashes, graves her plains;
Slaughter her groaning valleys fills,
And reeking carnage melts her hills.

"O Thou, whose awful word can bind
The roaring waves, the raging wind,
Mad tyrants tame, break down the high,
Whose haughty foreheads beat the sky.

"Make bare thine arm, great King of kings!
That arm alone salvation brings:
That wonder-working arm which broke
From Israel's neck the Egyptian yoke.

"Burst every dungeon, every chain,
Give injured slaves their rights again;
Let truth prevail, let discord cease,
Speak — and the world shall smile in peace."

On the 7th of April, a large meeting was held on the Castle-Hill, Sheffield, at which Henry Redhead Yorke* presided: he addressed the multitude from

* He called himself Yorke, but always said he was the son of a plantation agent, or governor, of the name of Redhead, at Berbuda, a small West Indian island belonging to the Codrington family. "He was," said Montgomery, "if not a mulatto, a quadroon — a fiery orator, and, as I thought, in the habit of delivering as his own, portions of the impassioned speeches of Mirabeau; his style was altogether French." His figure, when he appeared at

"a tribune," and spoke, as appeared from the testimony of persons present, with more vehemence than discretion. At this meeting it was resolved "to present an address to the King on behalf of Muir, Palmer, Skirving, Margarot, and Gerrald, convicted of libels; to petition the King for the total abolition of slavery *; and that no further petitions be presented to the House of Commons on the subject of Reform." With such exciting topics, and so fervid an orator as the chairman —to say nothing of other speakers—it is not surprising that a glowing report of the proceedings, including the drawing of Yorke in a carriage by the crowd, was carried to the magistrate. Montgomery, and three or four of Mr. Gales's printers having been present, they were summoned before "Justice Wilkinson," at Broomhall, and examined as to what Yorke had said at the meeting, the object being to obtain evidence upon which to found and support a charge of "constructive treason" against him.

A report of this examination was probably transmitted to government, for, on the 29th of May, William Broomhead and William Camage, the active and late Secretaries of the Constitutional Society, along with three or four other persons, were apprehended in Sheffield, and conveyed to London under a military escort. In a few days, several other inhabitants of the

the Castle Hill meeting, was good, and his dress striking, if not in the best taste — with Hessian boots and a stock of republican plainness; he wore a silk coat and waistcoat of court fashion; his hair at the same time defying the curt French character by its luxuriant curl — a tendency derived from the sunnier side of his ancestral tree. For a specimen of his oratory, *vide* "Howell's State Trials," vol. xxv. cols. 662 — 687.

* This year a law passed in the American Congress, ordering that no vessel in the service of the United States should be employed, directly or indirectly, in the slave trade.

town were also arrested and held to bail, on charges of sedition.

Great things had certainly been anticipated from the meeting above alluded to, and especially from Yorke's speech, which it was expected would be "three hours" long! Gales, writing to his friend in Manchester, says, "Is it not worth while to ride to Sheffield, to be present at the meeting of 10,000 friends to the cause of man; and to hear one of the first orators in the kingdom in the open air?"

One of the resolutions of the meeting was, "that a congratulatory letter be transmitted to Thomas Walker, of Manchester, on his victory over Church and King Associations; and that the letter now read be approved." It was signed, and—but for the conclusive evidence to the contrary, quoted below—must have been taken to be written by Broomhead, "Secretary of the Constitutional Society."*

The letter to Walker was enclosed in one addressed to Aston by Gales, who said, "I need not tell you we had a capital meeting: I had the honour to be drawn along with Yorke amidst the thousands." This was the writer's last happy day in England! It seems, from his next and final letter to Aston, that the latter was dissatisfied alike with the tone of the meeting, the address to Walker, and the personal character of the leading orator!

* Walker, who was a respectable master manufacturer at Manchester, had been recently tried for a conspiracy to overturn the Constitution, and to assist the French in invading the realm, and acquitted. The subject has been brought afresh to the minds of many readers by Lord Campbell's Life of Erskine; the latter having, in his defence of Walker, indulged in a humorous description of the warlike stores which a Government spy had sworn were accumulated by the defendant for the contemplated rebellion.

Whatever may have been the opinion which Gales entertained of the notorious Thomas Paine, we can hardly wonder that it was considered as at least favourable, when extracts from his works often appeared in the "Register;" and still more conclusive evidence in the same direction is the following account of a local incident, given by himself:—"You were misinformed as to any riot having taken place here. In one part of the day, however, things wore rather a serious appearance. The C. and K. party (very small indeed), accompanied by a recruiting party, with drum and fife, presented themselves before my house, and gave me most loyal music, firing and shouting: and some one was heard to say, that my house should not have a whole window in it that night. This circumstance, I am firmly of opinion, had the effect of calling together a wall of defence, for, about an hour afterwards, upwards of a hundred stout democrats stood before us, singing 'God save great Thomas Paine!' to the loyal tune. This party increased to 500, and paraded the streets peaceably (except singing) all the day. Nor would they leave till they apprehended all danger to be past. You see what it is to be supported. I do not think a riot can be managed here: this was apparently a push for one."*

Few persons will refuse the hypothesis glanced at in the closing sentence of Mr. Gales's account: and into such a pandemonium of party had young Montgomery been just dragged from the religious seclusion of Fulneck! It is true, he took no ostensible part in the memorable Castle Hill meeting, nor was his name uttered in any way during the public proceedings; yet it will be seen from the following letter, that he had, in reality, played at least one very important card in the affair.

Gales to Aston, Sept. 26. 1793.

James Montgomery to Joseph Aston.

"Sheffield, April 16. 1794.

"DEAR SIR,

"After the very severe censure which you have been pleased to pass upon the letter to Mr. Walker, adopted by the late public meeting, it requires something more than courage — it requires ingenuousness — for the real author to step forward and unmask himself. But as you have formerly, upon several occasions, hinted your approbation of some trifling effusions of my pen, and even, in your last letter to Mr. Gales, expressed yourself favourable to the language and sentiments of the letters to the persecuted patriots, which makes me proud to claim them as my productions, I hope I shall not wholly forfeit your indulgent opinion, when I confess myself *guilty* of having written the address to Mr. W.

"The approbation of men of sense and genius is, and always shall be, the climax of my ambition. I am myself too young, too inexperienced, and perhaps too vain of my own productions, to judge coolly of their merits or defects; and whenever it is my misfortune to be censured, when my folly led me to expect praise, from persons of elegant taste, I am willing to suppose myself wrong, however confirmed my opinion may have been before. In the present instance, I am not ashamed to confess that I feel more mortified by your single disapprobation than I felt flattered upon Castle Hill, when that unfortunate letter was unanimously voted by more than ten thousand persons, as a proper congratulatory address to Mr. W. on his late triumph.

"Notwithstanding, if you will condescend to read the letter over again, you will find you have mistaken my meaning, when you say, 'I wonder why Mr. W. ceased to be a patriot when he became a philanthropist; I never heard till now they were incompatible.' It is true an old musty proverb says, 'Charity begins at home;' but if charity be always confined to home, it is no longer charity, but avarice, selfishness, injustice. Patriotism, in the same manner, when shackled by prejudice, and chained like a wild beast within the cage of a province or a nation, is a mean, a despicable, a

foolish bugbear, which sets folks of different countries together by the ears. No man ceases to be a patriot when he becomes a philanthropist; the characters are not incompatible; so far from it, in my opinion, they are *inseparable* when strictly understood and *justly* practised. . . . Pardon the boldness of this letter. I shall endeavour to profit by your censure, that I may, upon some more fortunate subject, again meet with your approbation.

"I am, with the sincerest respect,

"Yours, &c.,

"J. M. G.

"Mr. Aston, Manchester."

In the "Register" of June 20th appeared two Reports of "the Committee of Secrecy of the House of Commons;" in one of which it was stated that "the circumstance which first came under the observation of the Committee, containing a distinct trace of measures of this description [a recourse to arms], was a letter from a person at Sheffield, by profession a printer, who has since absconded, which was addressed 'Citizen Hardy, Secretary of the London Corresponding Society,' and which was found in the possession of Hardy, on the 12th day of May last, when he was taken into custody." This letter referred to the possibility of furnishing arms to the patriots: and the suspicion of having written it fell upon Mr. Gales, in the minds of many of his townspeople, who were, at that moment, unaware that the writer was really an individual in his employment. In these times of peril and dismay, when to be suspected was to be in imminent danger at the least, the proprietor of the "Register," as well as the actual writer of the letter, thought it prudent to escape, by a hasty flight, the risk and consequences of the prosecution which appeared to be impending.

The apprehensions of Gales were well founded —

he saved himself by his promptitude; meanwhile there was another of the Castle Hill orators, on whom the government was, if possible, still more anxious to fasten — this was Redhead Yorke. This eloquent, restless, and attractive individual, whose name was so intimately connected with the political movements of the times, was personally unknown to Mr. Gales before the winter of 1793, when he presented himself one evening at Sheffield as a patriot; he was about twenty-two years of age, a handsome figure, and so insinuating were his manners, that he contrived not only to domicile himself for a time in the family at the Hartshead, but ultimately to obtain the affections of his host's youngest sister, Sarah. This circumstance became the unforeseen hinge of an important event. Yorke left Sheffield for Derby in an unsatisfactory manner, so far as his intentions towards the lady were concerned; and to that town, after having published his newspaper on the 16th of March, Gales followed him. In the course of the day, a government messenger, accompanied by the local constable, entered the house of the Sheffield printer with a warrant for his arrest on a charge of conspiracy! After searching the premises in vain for Mr. Gales, they proceeded to a public house adjacent, armed with a similar authority for the capture of Davison, who at the moment sat smoking with a fellow compositor. On the constable putting his head into the room and asking if Davison was there, "No," replied his companion, with admirable presence of mind, "he's just gone off." The officer turned aside, and the justly alarmed secretary of the "Constitutional Society" immediately made his escape — ultimately reaching America, where he afterwards settled, throve, and became a magistrate. Thus by the merest accident, apparently,

both Gales and his man, and even Yorke himself, missed for the time, at least, the luck of a lodgment in the Old Bailey prison, not to say the peril of a trial for sedition. Yorke, indeed, was afterwards taken, and, along with Gales and Davison (then out of the way), indicted for "a conspiracy to traduce and vilify the Commons House of Parliament; to excite disaffection towards the king and his government in the minds of his subjects; to excite riots, and tumults, and commotions in the realm." The trial took place at York, on the 23rd July, 1795. The evidence referred almost entirely to the Sheffield Castle Hill Meeting; the witnesses for the prosecution being the same persons who had been produced on the trial of Hardy. Yorke addressed the jury in an eloquent speech; but was found guilty, and sentenced to two years' imprisonment in Dorchester gaol. Here, again, his captivating address availed him; he married his keeper's daughter, and was, we believe, sometime afterwards called to the bar. In the course of a few years more, Yorke, to Montgomery's astonishment, presented himself at Sheffield, on the recruiting service, and in the regimentals of a lieutenant-colonel! The change, however, was too flagrant for the place; for, it is said, the young fellows, instead of enlisting into his corps, hooted him out of the town.

In the following week's "Register," Mr. Gales took a formal final leave of his friends and readers; denying, at the same time, most distinctly, that he had either written, dictated, or been privy to the letter addressed to Hardy. "Could my imprisonment," says the fugitive editor, "or even death, *serve* the cause which I have espoused — the cause of peace, liberty, and justice, — it would be cowardice to fly from it; but, convinced that ruining my family, and distressing my friends, by risking either, would only gratify the igno-

rant and the malignant, I shall seek that livelihood in another land which I cannot peaceably obtain in this. To be *accused* is now to be *guilty:* and however conscious I may be of having neither done, said, or written any thing that militates against peace, order, and good government, yet when I am told witnesses are *suborned* to swear me guilty of treasonable and seditious practices, it becomes prudent to avoid such dark assassins, and to leave to the *informers*, and their *employers*, the mortification of knowing, that however deep their villany was planned, it has been *unsuccessful.*" With this address, the "Sheffield Register" expired, after having existed about eight years.* Some ultra-Tory writer marked his sense of the importance of that event, by printing, with "London" on the title-page, "The Downfall of the 'Register;' an after-piece, in one act: scene lies in Sheffield."

* The suddenness of Mr. Gales's flight, and the determination of his principal creditor, George Robinson, of Paternoster Row, led to his being declared a bankrupt. His debts amounted altogether to about 300*l.*; and we believe every creditor received twenty shillings in the pound.

CHAP. XIV.

1794.

MONTGOMERY SUCCEEDS TO GALES'S PRINTING ESTABLISHMENT. — ENTERS INTO PARTNERSHIP WITH JAMES NAYLOR. — COMMENCES THE "IRIS" NEWSPAPER. — POETICAL GREETING. — ANNOUNCEMENT OF EDITORIAL PRINCIPLES. — THE "ENTHUSIAST." — POETRY AND POLITICS. — TRIAL OF THOMAS HARDY. — EVIDENCE AFFECTING THE SHEFFIELD PATRIOTS. — PROTEST OF MR. GALES. — ACQUITTAL OF HARDY AND OTHERS CELEBRATED. — MONTGOMERY'S HYMN ON THE OCCASION.

MONTGOMERY having now been about two years in the printing office, and during that time more or less connected with the editorial department of the paper, was advised to look upon himself as the fittest person to succeed Mr. Gales — a most perilous position, it must be admitted, for so ardent and inexperienced a young man to aim at, surrounded as he was, too, by friends more enthusiastic than himself. Apprehensions of any such danger appear, however, to have been but at most of secondary consideration. To find means to purchase the presses, types, and other working materials, presented a more immediate and formidable difficulty among his friends, until a gentleman of the name of Naylor*, before this time almost unknown to Mont-

* At this time a Unitarian preacher in the Upper Chapel, Norfolk Street, Sheffield, and a "sleeping partner" in a silver-plating establishment in that town. He soon afterwards married, and went into business with his brother in Manchester, where he became a bankrupt. Mr. Naylor was nephew to Dr. Thomas Percival, of Manchester, and the *Sophron* of that gentleman's work, "A Father's Instructions to his Children," published in 1777. He died at Altrincham, in Cheshire, April 12. 1846, aged 84.

gomery, offered to advance the whole of the money, and become a partner in the concern. The price paid altogether was 1600*l.*, including 500*l.* which was considered as paid for copyright, an item of very questionable value under the circumstances; and, as the event showed, greatly overrated in the estimate; for the moderation of the new proprietary lost them a thousand subscribers the first year.

"James Montgomery and Co." having announced, in the last "Register," their intention to publish, on the ensuing Friday, a new Sheffield newspaper, entitled the "Iris," all parties were on the alert, awaiting the *début* of the new editor, whose political principles were generally known. Thus, in a few short months, had our hero passed from a seclusion almost equal to that of the cloister, to what was then, if not now, one of the most responsible and perilous stations in active life —that of a newspaper publisher, politician, and patriot; exhibiting, as if in proof of Dr. Johnson's notable averment, "something of that indistinct and headstrong ardour for liberty which a man of genius always catches when he enters the world, and always suffers to cool as he passes forward."*

On the 4th of July appeared the first number of the "Iris," with the following conciliatory and pacific motto:—

> "Ours are the plans of fair, delightful Peace,
> Unwarped by party rage, to live like brothers."

The poetical corner which had heretofore been "The Repository of Genius," now assumed the less intelligible title of "CEMPTUCET†, or the Bower of the Muses,"

* Life of Lyttelton.

† CEMPTUCET, an anagram formed out of the initial letters of the names of the Muses. Montgomery was not the author of this conceit, nor did his taste ever approve of it.

and contained the following Parnassian flower from the pen of a friend, Barbara Hoole — afterwards Mrs. Hofland: —

To the "Iris."

"O say, art thou the bright-eyed maid,
Saturnia's messenger confest?
Does sacred truth thy mind pervade,
And love celestial warm thy breast?

"Com'st thou with covenanted bow,
Blest signature of heavenly peace,
To lay the waves of faction low,
And bid the winds of discord cease;

"The various forms of good intent,
In one pure social league to bind,
By prudence taught, through virtue bent,
To reconcile the public mind?

"Are these thy aims? bright vision hail!
Midst freedom's clouded hemisphere,
No storms thy genius shall assail,
Nor latent mischiefs hover near.

"Fair be thy form, and gay thine hue,
In learning's Tyrian lustre drest,
Grounded on truth's celestial blue,
Tinged from the Muse's yellow vest.

"Far may thy glowing beauties shine,
And glad success secure thy beam,
While Reason mild, and Peace divine,
Roll o'er the earth their lucid stream."

This not inelegant composition was received with complacency by the editor, as displaying those principles which he would wish to maintain in the "Iris," and as a specimen of the poetry he should always be glad to receive for this department; and it must be confessed that the lines contain touches not unworthy the *Irim*

de cœlo, which the author was anxious should shine in the atmosphere of public favour.

We give the following extract, not as exhibiting any singular felicity of thought or expression, but as the editor's maiden address to the public, and as the annunciation of those principles by which the "Iris" was to be distinguished: —

"The editors of this paper beg leave to assure the public, that every endeavour will be used to render it worthy of their patronage; and if a careful selection of the earliest intelligence can recommend it to their favour, they doubt not of its being honoured with a liberal support. They profess themselves desirous to avoid, in this publication, the influence of *party spirit*. Like other men, they have their own political opinions and their own political attachments; and they have no scruple to declare themselves *friends* to the cause of *Peace* and *Reform*, however such a declaration may be likely to expose them in the present times of *alarm* to obnoxious epithets and unjust and ungenerous reproaches. But while they acknowledge themselves unconvinced of the necessity or expediency of the present war, and fully persuaded that a melioration of the state of the representative body is intimately connected with the true interests of the nation, they declare their firm attachment to the *Constitution of its Government*, as administered by KING, LORDS, and COMMONS; and they scorn the imputations which would represent every reformer as a Jacobin, and every advocate for peace as an enemy to his king and country. They pity those persons, whatever their principles may be, who, in endeavouring to defend them, have recourse to the mean acts of vilifying and abusing their opponents; and they proclaim their own firm purpose to avoid descending to the littleness of personal controversy, or to recriminations unworthy alike of Britons, of Christians, or of men. It is their wish, on the contrary, to cherish, as far as they are able, a good opinion of those who differ from them in sentiment; to allow the weight of their arguments where they really deserve consideration; to

place them in the most favourable view; and to give their readers a fair opportunity of forming an impartial judgment by a comparison of the best remarks which can be made on all sides. At the same time, they declare it is not their intention to enter themselves as parties on the field of political controversy. For though they shall think it their duty to state the reasonings on both sides upon public and interesting questions, they do not conceive it to be at all the proper business of the editor of a newspaper to present his readers with his own political opinions; and whatever theirs may at any time be, it is too much their wish to live in peace and charity with all men, to feel disposed to come forward as angry zealots or violent partisans. Their utmost ambition will be gratified if they shall be able to recommend this paper to the public notice as an authentic, impartial, and early record of the sentiments of. OTHERS on those great political topics which now agitate the world, and of those *interesting events* which almost every day now furnishes, and which cannot but mark out the present æra to the peculiar attention of the politician, the historian, and the philosopher."

The foregoing, it will be perceived, are principles of editorial, or rather of proprietary policy, widely different from those which characterised the "Sheffield Register."

In the fourth number of the "Iris" Montgomery commenced a series of essays entitled the "Enthusiast." These were principally of an entertaining or satirical nature. The first essay contains a playful relation, in his own words, of an incident which gave a colour to his life and pursuits, and which has been already quoted.* It is, on the whole, no unfair specimen of his earlier manner of writing in the humorous style:—

"During my childhood, sweet age of innocence, of ignorance! I showed not the slightest symptoms of ever becoming a great man. I was fond of whipping-tops, hobby-horses, marbles, and gingerbread, and hated my battledore and easy-book as cordially as a young heir to—not a grain

* P. 39. *antè.*

of sense, but, what is infinitely more valuable—an estate of some twenty or thirty thousand pounds per annum. At school even, when I was driven like a coal-ass through the Latin and the Greek grammars, I was distinguished for nothing but indolence and melancholy, brought upon me by a raging rhyming fever." . . . "Surely never was moon-struck lunatic more vexatiously haunted by the foul fiend than I have been through every nook and alley of life by the Muses! I wonder at what age other people become men; for my part, I confess I grow more childish every day. The more I learn, the less I know; and my whole life, as far as I can look back, has been one unceasing race of follies, hunting each other through the labyrinths of my brain, and playing at football with the passions of my heart. One consolation, however, soothes me when out of temper with myself and all mankind: I consider this whirligig of a world merely as my cradle, and myself as only in the infancy of my existence. Hence, I look forward with exulting hope to the dawning prospects of futurity, when, in brighter worlds, in purer air, and under milder skies, I shall ripen into man or rise into angel. Meanwhile, I am content to crawl upon the surface of this puny globe, like a caterpillar upon a cabbage; anticipating the time when, in the grave, I shall be changed into a torpid nymph, and in due time break forth from the shell of death—a glorious butterfly! Thus, considering myself a child in petticoats and leading-strings, I can be pleased with a rattle, and tickled with a straw; and if with my rattle and my straw I can please and tickle some of my playmates, and keep them in good humour, I shall be doubly gratified." —*Iris*, July 25.

James Montgomery to Joseph Aston.

"Sheffield, July 30. 1794.

"DEAR SIR,

"I am almost ashamed to take up my pen to write to one whom I so sincerely respect, after having treated him with such neglectful silence. If you knew how extremely averse I am to writing letters, you would excuse me. The truth

is, when I begin a letter to a friend, I generally waste one half of the paper with apologies, and the other in prefacing what I have to say; so that, to my utter chagrin, I find myself at *Land's End* before I have communicated even a sketch of my ideas. Whilst I am complaining, I am committing the selfsame trespass.* Forgive *me* for *trifling*; though when you write, I will not forgive *you*.

"You were no doubt astonished when first you saw my name annexed to the 'Iris;' and perhaps still more, when you observed the humiliating distance between the *cringing, trembling, gouty* pace of our *party*-coloured messenger of the gods, and the noble, firm, and manly gait of the late lamented 'Register!' I was absent in London on an anxious errand, with which you are too well acquainted [Mr. Gales's affairs], when our *two* first publications appeared, and was not less surprised than you (and thousands besides) when I read the modest language of these two papers." [Here follow seven lines, which are obliterated in the original letter, and which probably referred to the timidity, or, as most persons will think, the *discretion* of his partner.] "I cannot, therefore, expect that the 'Iris' will ever meet with, nor, in my opinion, deserve, the liberal patronage which supported the late 'Register.' But as far as my humble abilities can entertain and instruct my fellow-creatures, I am determined to exert them to the utmost of my power; and as I cannot but expect my efforts will meet with at least as much encouragement as they merit, I shall judge of their deserts by that encouragement; and if I fail to please, I will cheerfully resign, and melt into obscurity.

"If you have taken the trouble to examine the last page of the 'Iris,' you will have recognised an old friend, who, if he cannot make the public laugh *with* him, at any rate makes them laugh *at* him. But you will also have observed

* We have given this apologetical exordium, occurring, as it does, in so early a letter, and because it so truly characterises his epistolary productions in after life, whenever they related merely to friendly intercourse.

a whimsical attempt to begin a periodical chain of essays, under the character of the 'Enthusiast.' I confess myself the writer of that paper, wherein I have as clearly as possible copied the portrait of my own character, silly and trifling as it is. My reason for this is, because my partner is extremely averse to high-seasoned politics, such as the readers of the late 'Register' were wont to be pampered with in the last page of that paper" . . . [five or six lines obliterated]. "But still the public *must not*, because they *will not*, forego the entertainment of that page. I shall therefore endeavour to open a new field of amusement, and instruction, and thought, as you will perceive by the 'Enthusiast' of to-morrow. I shall wholly banish independent politics from my plan; yet I shall endeavour to wean the public from violent and irritating language on political themes, and also strive to amuse them with other subjects. The principal object of this letter is to request the favour of your correspondence in any character you please to assume. The elegant productions of your liberal and enlightened pen often graced the last page of the 'Register.' . . .

"Believe me, with unfeigned regard,

"Your sincere friend,

"JAMES MONTGOMERY.

"Mr. Aston, Manchester."

The hallucinations of fancy, alluded to in the preceding essay and letter, are evidently the confessions of a man of genius not formed for the stern, selfish, or reckless demands of party strife. The organisation of Montgomery's mind was, as we have said, exquisitely poetical; and never, perhaps, did a person embark on the stormy sea of politics more reluctantly, or was less adapted by talents and disposition to stem the tide or escape the dangers of his situation, than the editor of the "Iris." He had none of the qualities of "a good hater," said to be so essential to success; and while he heard the strains of his country's lyre rising around

him, he sighed to swell with his own notes the music which enchanted him. He discovered (to adopt the sentiment of a celebrated essayist) "that he, too, was of the progeny of Apollo, and that he had been iniquitously transferred into the hands of ignorant foster-parents, who had endeavoured to degrade and confine him to the sphere of regular employments and sober satisfactions."

Montgomery's mind was thus, as it were, *accidentally* determined to political literature; and, notwithstanding it occupied so considerable a portion of his life, and makes so large an item in his history, it was almost always irksome and even odious to him. This remark may startle some of those persons who have read, with a feeling akin to rapture, those delightful political disquisitions for which his "Iris" was at one period distinguished. But it must be recollected that, at the commencement of his career, we meet with nothing like the "leading articles" of every newspaper which is published now-a-days, nor even with those elaborate essays and recapitulations of passing events, in the concoction of which he was afterwards so happy, and which, although they were commonly more or less imaginative, sometimes singularly involved and parenthetical, and often worded with a caution (on delicate topics) appearing like indecision, were nevertheless always pleasing and instructive.

Fragments of conversations at different periods, which have been preserved, and upon which our belief of his early and general antipathy to politics is founded, will sufficiently evince his feelings on the subject. "In early life," said he, to one of the biographers, "I sometimes dipped into political controversy; but politics become more and more disagreeable to me; I enter no further into them than my duty, as editor of a news-

paper, compels me to do: frequently do I wish I had nothing to do with them; and if it were not for breaking up the concern, in which others are interested as well as myself, I would abandon the whole at once." To another friend he observed: "I hate politics; and I would as soon meet a bear as a ledger." The same gentleman informed him that he had recommended the "Iris" in the north of Scotland, as he wished, on account of the sentiments inculcated, to promote its more extensive circulation. "Many of my friends," returned Montgomery, "have made similar attempts, but they seldom succeeded; and where they have done so, the persons who have taken it through such persuasion have felt disappointed, and have given it up. The fact is, they usually found either too much of the poet, or too little; often, I believe, the former; and this was not consistent with the subject and plan of a newspaper, and can never be carried out by a person like myself, who always feels as if he had a dung-cart [meaning politics] dragging behind him." Yet, repugnant as it was to his feelings, he always wrote the commentary on public affairs for the week himself. Speaking once of this department of the paper, he said: "The whole of the remarks are my own; no man shall ever write anything there for me; I consider myself amenable for what is addressed to the public; and whether approbation or censure be the result, I shall neither be censured for the offences, nor run away with the applause due to another." The honourable feeling manifested in the closing sentence was not always entertained by others; and it afforded him some degree of triumph to be able to say to a friend, in a tone of pleasantry, "The editor of the London 'Courier' very often takes the pith of my remarks in the 'Iris,' but he never has the honesty to acknowledge it."

On the 28th of October, Thomas Hardy, of London, shoemaker, was brought up for trial at the Old Bailey, before the Lord Chief Justice Eyre and other judges, on the charge of high treason. The lowliness of the craft of the prisoner did not, of course, lessen the enormity of the offence specified in the indictment; and when it is stated, that the trial lasted eight days, and was continued during a great part of each of the intervening nights, and that the report of the proceedings occupies considerably more than a thousand printed columns in Howell's "State Trials" (pp. 200—1407.) some idea will be formed of its importance from these facts alone. But, besides the generally excited state of the country at this juncture, there was another circumstance which gave an intensity to this trial — the executioner's axe, which appeared so fearfully suspended over Hardy's head, was still wet with the blood of the "traitor," Robert Watt, on whom it had descended, at Edinburgh, since the opening of the present proceedings at the Old Bailey. Under these circumstances, it will easily be imagined that the solicitude of Hardy's friends concerning the result of his trial, would not be slightly participated by, and on account of, those individuals whose names were introduced in suspicious connection with the various facts sworn to by the witnesses in their evidence. In this perilous predicament several members of the "Sheffield Society for Constitutional Information," besides those arrested and carried to London to give evidence, were unexpectedly placed, mainly through the seizure and exhibition of their correspondence with Hardy, as secretary of the "London Corresponding Society."

The leading object of the government prosecutor, so far as Sheffield was concerned, was to show that secret and open meetings of an illegal character had been

held; that the people had been excited to treasonable designs; and that warlike weapons had been made and distributed. The inflammatory harangues of Yorke, at the Castle Hill meeting, and the proceedings in the Back-fields on the East-day, were particularly scrutinised. The following brief extract from the report of the trial will explain itself: —

"Mr. Edward Lauzun [the government messenger], called. *Mr. Garrow:* 'Look at these pamphlets ["The Fast-day, as observed at Sheffield," and a "Serious Lecture"]: where did you find them?' 'I found both these in Hardy's house.'— *Mr. Garrow*, to William Broomhead [of Sheffield]: 'After the "Serious Lecture" was read, there was a hymn prepared, I believe?' 'Yes.' 'Who prepared that hymn?' 'Gales printed it?' 'Who composed it?' 'It was composed by one Montgomery.' 'That was sung in full chorus by the whole assembly?' 'Yes, it was sung.' . . . . 'Who read the lecture?' 'A gentleman from Halifax.' 'Who composed and delivered the prayer?' 'Myself.'"

Relative to the making of pikes, the evidence is large —and for the fact, it must be added, conclusive: not so, however, as to the grounds of their adoption or intended use. It was alleged by every witness, that these arms had been prepared for self-defence, in consequence of an inflammatory but anonymous hand-bill, which was scattered in the streets of Sheffield overnight *, and referring to the introduction of Hessian troops into the kingdom, without the authority of parliament. Be that as it may, a letter addressed to "Citizen Hardy,"

* Who distributed these incendiary papers was never known. Whether, like the dragon's teeth of old, they were sown by some of those men of Cadmus who were prepared to reap the harvest which followed, or whether they were scattered by some one to accelerate, as they certainly did, the discomfiture of the reformers, is a question not easy to settle at present.

of Piccadilly, by his "fellow-citizen," Richard Davison, a workman of Gales's, who had decamped, mentions the use, form, and price of pikes: at the same time stating to whom orders may be sent.

The following questions and answers must be left to speak for themselves: —

"Henry Hill, a cutler, from Sheffield, sworn, and examined by Mr. Law.— . . . 'Do you remember the meeting of the 7th of April, 1794 [on the Castle Hill, Sheffield]?' 'Yes.' 'About that time was there any conversation prevalent in the town about providing yourselves with arms?' 'Yes.' 'Do you know Davison?' 'Yes.' 'What is he?' 'A printer.' 'He worked for Gales?' 'Yes.' 'Mr. Yorke lodged at Gales's at one time, did he not?' 'I cannot tell; he did not at that time.' 'Had you an application from Gales, to make any blades for pikes?' 'Yes.' 'When?' 'In the beginning of April.' 'Did he order any particular number?' 'No.' 'What orders did he give you?' 'He brought a bayonet as a pattern for me to make them by: I made one in a bayonet shape, and Davison approved of it.' 'Who was to pay you for the workmanship?' 'Davison.'—Widowson, a wood-turner, from Sheffield, was examined, as follows: 'Have you had any conversation with Yorke, or instructions from him, about arms?' 'Not directly with him; I made some myself.' 'What did you make?' 'I made a dozen for Mr. Gales.' 'A dozen of what?' 'Of pike-shafts.' 'Did Mr. Yorke know you were making them for Gales?' 'He did.'"

Such is a specimen of the evidence adduced on Hardy's trial, as affecting Mr. Gales. How far the anticipation of it suggested and justified his escape, the reader will judge. In reference to the most material allegation, he thus wrote in his farewell address, in the last number of the "Sheffield Register": —

"None but venal, unjust, or profligate minds, can so far pervert the principles of the [Constitutional] Society, as to

impute to them a wish to overturn the present form of government. They published their intentions to arm for self-defence and the internal safety of the kingdom; they avowed their motives, and they vindicated their pretensions from a clause in the Bill of Rights, that great bulwark of British freedom, which the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act goes so nearly to sap. It has been insinuated, and I believe pretty generally believed, that I wrote the letter* which is referred to by the Secret Committee, concerning pikes, and given in the last 'Register.' This charge, in the most unequivocal manner, *I deny.* I neither wrote, dictated, or was privy to it; nor, till Mr. Hardy's apprehension, had I any knowledge of it."

It is only necessary to add here, that on what Dr. Parr calls the "ever-memorable and ever-honoured fifth of November," Hardy was acquitted; and on the 15th of December following, the five members of the Sheffield Constitutional Society were discharged, on entering into recognisances to give evidence against Mr. Henry Yorke. A few days afterwards "The Friends of Reform" dined together in Sheffield, to celebrate the enlargement of their co-patriots. On this occasion, a hymn composed by Montgomery was sung: it contained the following verses, which are not unworthy of the better days of the author: —

"Oh! Thou, who from the abyss of night
Called the first beams of morning light!
Whose voice obedient chaos heard;
Who built Creation with a word;

"From the dark tomb of mental death
Awake the nations with a breath;
Round the bright circle of the sun
Let Virtue shine, let Knowledge run.

* It will be recollected that these remarks were published by Mr. Gales some months before the trial of Hardy disclosed the name of the actual writer of the letter in question.

"Wide as expands the kindling day,
High as the radiant milky-way;
So wide her arms let Freedom spread,
So high let Justice lift her head.

"Bid Peace her smiling reign resume,
Where deserts howl, let Eden bloom:
Already is Reform begun,—
The work is thine — thy will be done!

"Though all the universe shall die,
Though heaven and earth in ruins lie,
Though sun and stars in smoke decay,
Thy TRUTH shall never pass away."

The foregoing verses, which, with the substance of the speeches delivered on the occasion when they were sung, appeared in the "Iris," were not calculated to throw any doubt upon the writer's sympathy with the Reformers: and it was said that the party who were anxious to get up a prosecution against him, hesitated between this evidence and that afforded by the printing of the song presently to be mentioned. It may be here added, in Montgomery's own words — "I was preserved from joining myself to any of the political societies, till they were broken up in 1794, when I did associate myself with the remnant of one of them [the "Constitutional"], to support the families of several accused leaders who were detained prisoners in London, under the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act*, and who were finally acquitted without being brought to trial."

* Dr. Parr's constant toast at this time was, "Qui suspenderunt, suspendantur." — Johnstone's *Memoirs of Parr*, p. 500.

CHAP. XV.

1794.

CRITICAL SITUATION OF MONTGOMERY.—PRINTS "A PATRIOTIC SONG" FOR A STREET-HAWKER.—IT IS DECLARED TO BE A "SEDITIOUS LIBEL."—MONTGOMERY ARRAIGNED FOR TRIAL AT THE SHEFFIELD SESSIONS, FOR PRINTING IT.—TRAVERSES THE INDICTMENT TO DONCASTER.—VERSES ON HARDY.—BAIL.—REMARKS IN THE "IRIS."—LETTER TO ASTON.—ADDRESS TO MR. GALES.—THE MISSES GALES.

It will easily be conceived that the adroit manner in which Gales had eluded the hands of the government prosecutor, when so nearly in his grasp, would be likely to sharpen the vigilance of local informers in reference to the successor of the obnoxious patriot. That Montgomery was fully aware of the delicacy of his position, the pacific title, motto, and leading address of his newspaper sufficiently evince. He was, however, surrounded by persons less discreet than himself—*he* never saw a *cap of liberty* on the printing press, but others have seen it*: *he* took no active part in seditious meetings, but his workman did: meanwhile, his paper was the organ, and his office the rendezvous, of the disaffected party.

We shall now avail ourselves of Montgomery's own

* It is worthy of remark, that for many years a button was used by the Nottinghamshire militia which bore *a cap of liberty* resting on a book, over which was a hand holding a drawn sword, with the motto, "*Pro legibus et libertate.*" The design was made by the celebrated Major Cartwright, in 1775, when he was appointed major of that regiment.

words: "Little more than a month after I had become connected with the newspaper [as proprietor], I was one day called into the bookseller's shop, where business orders were received. There I found a poor-looking elderly man, whom I recollected to have seen in the street a little while before, when I was attracted both by his grotesque appearance, and his comical address as a ballad-monger. He stood with a bundle of pamphlets in his hand, crying out in a peculiar tone, 'Here you have twelve songs for a penny.' Then he recapitulated at full length the title of each, thus: 'The first song in the book is'—so and so; 'the second song in the book'—so and so; 'the third song'—so and so; and on he went 'so and so' to the end of the catalogue. He now offered me the specimen of an article in his line, and asked what he must pay for six quires of the same? I immediately replied that I did not deal in such commodities, having better employment for my presses; he must therefore apply elsewhere (I believe I named a place where he might be served). 'But,' he rejoined, like one who had some knowledge of the terms used by printers, 'you have *this* standing in your office.' 'That is more than I know,' was my answer. Taking up the printed leaf, I perceived that it contained two copies of verses, with each of which I had been long familiar, but had never seen them coupled in that shape before; at the top of the page was the impression of a wood-cut [Liberty and the British Lion], which I recognised as having figured in the frontispiece of an extinct periodical, issued by my predecessor, and entitled the 'Patriot.' The paper also, of which a large stock had devolved to me, was of a particular kind, being the material of certain forms for the registration of freeholds, under a still-born act of parliament, printed on one side only, and which had

been sold for waste. On discovering this, I went up into the office, and asked when and for whom such things as I held in my hand had been printed, as I had no knowledge of the job? 'Oh, Sir,' said the foreman, 'they were set up ever so long ago by Jack [Mr. Gales's apprentice], 'for himself, and to give away to his companions; and the matter is now standing in the types, just as it was when you bought the stock in the office.' 'Indeed!' I exclaimed; 'but how came the ballad-seller, who was bawling out his twelve songs for a penny the other day, to have a copy?' In explanation of this, he stated, that he had formerly known him, when he himself was an apprentice in an office in Derby, from which such wares were supplied to hawkers. Hearing his voice in the street, he had called him in for old-acquaintance sake, and, in the course of talking about trade, had shown him an impression of Jack's songs, by which he thought his old acquaintance might make a few pence in his strange way. 'Well then,' said I, 'let the poor fellow have what he wants, if it will do him any good; but what does he mean by *six quires?*' 'Not quires of whole sheets, but six times twenty-four copies of this size,' was the information I received on this new branch of literature. I then went down stairs and told my customer that he might have the quantity he wanted for eighteenpence, which would barely be the expense of the paper and working off. He was content; the order was executed, the parcel delivered by myself into his hand, and honestly paid for by him. I have often said, when I have had occasion to tell this adventure of my romantic youth (for adventure it was, and no every-day one, as the issue proved), that if ever in my life I did an act which was *neither* good nor bad, or, if either, *rather* good *than* bad, it was this.

"Two months afterwards, one of the town constables

waited upon me, and very civilly requested that I would call upon him at his residence in the adjacent street. Accordingly I went thither, and asked him for what purpose he wanted to see me. He then produced a magistrate's warrant, charging me with having, on the 16th day of August preceding, printed and published a certain seditious libel respecting the war then waging between his Majesty and the French Government, entitled 'A Patriotic Song, by a Clergyman of Belfast.' I was quite puzzled to comprehend to what production from my press the charge alluded, not the remotest idea of the ballad-seller occurring to me at that moment." A copy of the song was then shown to Montgomery, the identical one from which we now copy, the verse marked as libellous being that here printed in italics:

A Patriotic Song, by a Clergyman of Belfast.

"While tyranny marshals its minions around,
And bids its fierce legions advance,
Fair Freedom! the hopes of thy sons to confound
And restore his old empire in France,—

"What friend among men to the rights of mankind,
But is fired with resentment to see
The satraps of pride and oppression combined,
To prevent a great land being free?

"*Europe's fate on the contest's decision depends;*
Most important its issue will be,
For should France be subdued, Europe's liberty ends,
If she triumphs the world will be free.

"Then let every true patriot unite in her cause—
A cause of such moment to man:
Let all whose souls spurn at tyrannical laws,
Lend her all the assistance they can.

"May the spirit of Sparta her armies inspire,
And the star of America guide;
May a Washington's wisdom, a Mirabeau's fire,
In her camps and her councils preside!

May her sons' fatal discord no longer divide;
'Mongst her chiefs no dark traitors be found;
But may they united resist the rough tide,
Till their toils be with victory crowned!

"And at length when sweet peace from her sphere shall descend,
When the friends of oppression have fled,
Immortal renown shall those heroes attend,
Who for freedom fought, conquered, and bled.

"Blazoned high then their deeds shall swell history's page,
And adorn lofty poetry's lays,
While the memory of tyrants, the curse of their age,
In oblivion's dark bastile decays."

Of course, the instant the printed slip was placed before Montgomery, he recollected his transaction with the hawker; but remarked, "this song cannot be a libel on the present war, because it was published, to my knowledge, long before hostilities between England and France began in 1793; having been composed for an anniversary celebration of the destruction of the Bastile, and referring solely to the invasion of France by the Austrian and Prussian armies under the Duke of Brunswick, in July, 1792."

In reply to further inquiry, the constable explained that, on the day mentioned in the warrant, he was going down the High Street, when he saw a man with ballads in his hand, and heard him cry "straws to sell." As it was his business to look after vagrants, he went up to the hawker and bought a straw of him for a

halfpenny; but complaining that it was a dear bargain, he received one of the songs to boot. Regarding the whole affair as suspicious, he immediately took both the man and his whole stock of papers into safe keeping. The prisoner, having confessed of whom he obtained the songs, was taken before a magistrate, and committed to the house of correction, less as a punishment for any offence of his own, than to secure his appearance against the printer, to whom "the trick of selling a straw, and giving something not worth one, was new;" though a similar *ruse* had been practised just before Montgomery came to Sheffield, by a fellow who had, in one night, built a "Mushroom Hall" upon Crookes Moor, and on the following Sunday opened it as an alehouse!

As the Sheffield Sessions were then being holden, Montgomery was forthwith arraigned, pleaded "Not guilty," and traversed the indictment to Doncaster Sessions, to be held in the following January. Bail to the amount of 200*l.* from himself, and from two sureties 100*l.* each, being demanded, the latter was immediately given by two tradesmen, who happened to be in court, and with neither of whom had the prisoner more than a very slight acquaintance.* Joseph Jordan,

* One of the individuals alluded to, who interested himself at this critical moment, not only by coming forward himself, but inducing another person to join him in giving the required bail, was a well-known hosier, of the name of Palfreyman. This activity, coupled with some degree of political notoriety on his own account, soon exposed him to the penalty of imprisonment. It is said that the magistrate who received the bail for Montgomery's appearance at the quarter sessions, expressed, at the same time, a hope that by and by "that d——d stockinger would himself be got hold of." This threat was presently realised in a somewhat curious way. Informations were laid, and convictions, with fines, obtained against several shopkeepers in Sheffield for using light weights.

the song-seller, was remanded to Wakefield, with a recommendation from the bench that he should be "kindly treated" for three months longer, that he might be forthcoming on the trial at Doncaster.

Political songs — the natural exponents of party-feeling in a free country, where the bulk of the people could read — had been much in vogue since the Revolution, and never perhaps were they more popular or more influential than during the reigns of "the three Georges" who in turn succeeded to the British throne after the death of Queen Anne.*

Palfreyman believed, with or without sufficient reason, that persons of his class of politics were the selected victims; and, under this impression, he incautiously remarked, that the law under which the offending shopkeepers suffered was a beneficial one, provided it was impartially administered. For this libel on the integrity of the local bench, he was imprisoned three months in York Castle. The interest with which at least some of the older inhabitants of Sheffield will peruse this memento of a well-remembered townsman, must be our apology for adding to a note, already so extended. On the enlargement of Palfreyman, he advertised in Montgomery's newspaper that he had brought with him from York Castle a collection of knitted and other work done by the prisoners, which he would sell for them at his shop on Snig Hill; an act of charity which was carried out with great advantage to the poor convicts. At this time, the minister of St. Paul's Church was the Rev. Alex. Mackenzie, a man whose politics — and he did not hold them coolly — were diametrically opposed to Palfreyman's. The latter, however, had long supplied the former with stockings of the well-known "Oxford mixture" — black silk and fine white yarn — and these, as the cleric was an unusually large person, had to be manufactured to order by Coltmans, of Leicester. On Palfreyman's reappearance in his shop, Mackenzie entered one day: "Well, thou Jacobin," said he, "thou hast got back again from gaol — I like thy spirit in this instance;" and he doubled his usual order for stockings.

* Numerous specimens of these compositions relating to this period may be seen in Wright's "History of England under the

At the same time that Montgomery appears to have acted with commendable caution in *prose*, he may be said to have identified himself somewhat too fearlessly with the patriots, in *rhyme;* especially when we recollect that he was not only under bond to give evidence on the trial of Yorke, if called upon, but actually under prosecution himself. In this critical position, he not only wrote the spirited "Hymn," before cited, but published "Verses, occasioned by the visit of Thomas Hardy, immediately after his acquittal, to the grave of his wife, who had died, during his confinement, in child-bed, declaring, in her last moments, that the grief occasioned by her husband's misfortunes had broken her heart."

Pending the trial itself, much interest was naturally excited on the subject, and opinions were very freely expressed, as well in favour of the printer as otherwise; both parties confidently prejudging the cause in its issue. To allay this ferment of discussion, as well as state his own feelings and views, Montgomery addressed the readers of the "Iris," and advised his friends to suspend their judgment for the present, and await a decision which he felt no reluctance to entrust to the verdict of a British jury. Referring to the committal of Jordan to Wakefield, for want of bail, he says:—"May the hand of affliction smite me as severely as it has smitten him, and may the arrows of adversity pierce my soul as deeply as they have pierced his, if even in the person of my enemy I forget

House of Hanover, illustrated from the Caricatures and Satires of the Day," 1848, an ingenious and entertaining work, in which, however, the merits of the government, which saved this country from the perils to which it was exposed from an avowed propagandism of the lessons of revolutionary France, in the reign of George III., are not over highly estimated.

the respect due to sacred misfortune! Yet, in the present instance, whilst my heart bleeds for the distress, and commiserates the condition of my accuser, I wish to see him eat the bread of honest industry, neither moistened by his own tears nor embittered by mine—for base is the office, and guilty are the wages, of an *Informer;* I would rather perish by the snares of a traitor, than reap the harvest of his treachery. To the justice of an enlightened public I submit myself and my cause. Since my entrance upon business, that generous public has honoured me with a patronage far superior to my merits: may my life expire with my gratitude! Though I wish ever to be considered as an advocate in the sacred cause of LIBERTY and of ALL MANKIND, I am conscious to myself of no other views than such as are strictly consonant to the *principles and spirit* of the *British Constitution:* that Constitution in its genuine purity I truly revere; and, deploring only its abuses and corruptions, I do not hesitate to declare that I am behind none of His Majesty's subjects in that *just loyalty* which consists not in a fiery party rage, *but a steady attachment to the true interests of my country, and dutiful obedience to those laws by which the king reigns, and the people are governed.* Upon these principles the "Iris" has hitherto been conducted, and upon these principles it is still intended to be continued. Notwithstanding all the disadvantages under which it was born, the "Iris" has been nursed with tenderness, and cherished with indulgence: though its cradle has been rocked amidst tempests, tempests have not *yet* crushed it; though the harpies of envy, bigotry, and prejudice, on threatening wings, have hovered round it, those harpies have not *yet* devoured it. The infant has been devoted to its country. May its youth acquire increasing strength, and may that strength be exerted

only in the cause of TRUTH, of JUSTICE, and HUMANITY! May its manhood be glorious, and its old age honourable! But if it ever should forfeit the character of impartiality and independence, may it *perish*, and with it *perish* James Montgomery!"

James Montgomery to Joseph Aston.

"Sheffield, Oct. 30. 1794.

"DEAR SIR,

"You know ere this what a comfortable situation I am in at present. I assure you I have got York Castle wedged in my head, and, for the life of me, I cannot get it out again; indeed, my upper story is so full of it, that there is scarce room for anything else to breathe. No matter—when things are so bad with me, I comfort myself that they are no worse. . . . [six lines obliterated.] I am accused of having wickedly, maliciously, seditiously, and flagitiously attempted to overturn the King and Constitution by force and arms—of what?—a halfpenny song! I am accused of having attempted to move, inflame, and stir up sedition amongst His Majesty's liege subjects,—by what?—a song upon the demolition of the Bastile in France! I am further, upon the *oath* of the jurors of our Sovereign Lord the now King, charged with *printing* and *publishing* a scandalous and false libel upon the *present* just and necessary *war*.—How?—By *reprinting* and *republishing* a *Patriotic Song*, written by Mr. Scott of Dromore, and sung at a festival held at Belfast, in commemoration of the destruction of the Bastile, on the 14th July, 1792; which afterwards was printed in the 'Northern Star,' the 'Morning Chronicle,' and in the 'Sheffield Register' of that year, eight months before the war commenced. Thus, this false, scandalous, seditious libel was originally uttered long before the war was dreamed of. . . . [thirty lines obliterated.] Paul Positive, Esq., Marcellus Moonshine, J. M. G., Plato, and 40,000 other idle fellows, send their best respects to you and Peter Dubious.

"I am, with sincere esteem,

"Your friend,

"J. M. G.

"Mr. Aston, Manchester."

Immediately on leaving Sheffield, Mr. Gales found a temporary asylum in the house of a fellow patriot, Mr. Payne, of Newhill Grange, near Wath: and among Montgomery's exploits in horsemanship, was the carrying Mrs. Gales behind him on a pillion, to visit the friend who afforded this unsuspected hiding-place for her husband. "We were," says he, "four hours in riding eight miles." After remaining concealed in England a short time, during which Mrs. Gales endeavoured *, with the assistance of Montgomery, to realise a small sum amidst the wreck of their affairs, the fugitive and his family contrived to reach Hamburgh, where, for a time, new trials awaited them.

In a long letter, dated Dec. 4. 1794, and signed "Paul Positive," Montgomery apologises to Aston for the non-insertion of a communication of his in the "Iris," in consequence of his partner being "so horribly intimidated at the prosecution levelled against" himself. He then gives an affecting account of the sufferings of Mr. and Mrs. Gales and their children, who having embarked at Hamburgh for the United States, encountered such tempestuous weather at the mouth of the Elbe, that they were compelled to return to Altona, forfeiting 20*l.* of passage-money, which, with loss on their sea stores, reduced their means one-half! Here a daughter was born, to whom they gave the name of Altona; she is, we believe, still living.† From thence he proceeded

* We have before us several letters written by her at the most calamitous crisis of their affairs; and they exhibit Winifred Gales in a most pleasing character, as a wife, and woman of business, and an adept with the pen.

† Mr. Gales had eight children, who lived to grow up, viz., — 1. Joseph; 2. Winifred; 3. Thomas; 4. Sarah; 5. Altona; 6. Anne Eliza; 7. Caroline; 8. Weston. We believe they all married, except one of the daughters. Joseph is still living,

to the United States, where he arrived in safety, and was soon afterwards joined by Mrs. Gales and her children.* The Sheffield Reformer did not leave his native land thus suddenly, and, as it turned out, never to see it again, without sharing the sympathy of his compatriots; for, on the 30th of July, the members of the "Constitutional Society" voted to him an address of "approbation and condolence."†

Montgomery had now the happiness of returning with large interest, and in a manner not to have been foreseen, to the nearest relatives of his late master, the kindness he had received from himself. The two elder

and also his sister, Mrs. Seaton, of Washington. Thomas was for several years Judge-Advocate General of the most southerly department of the United States, and afterwards Indian agent at Natchitoches, where he died, Nov. 18. 1845. We may perhaps be pardoned if we preserve here a little memento of the very early life of Colonel Thomas Gales, which turned up fifty years after the period alluded to in the text. One day, in the year 1844, Miss Gales received a small piece of paper, with the words "TOM, BE QUIET," printed thereon in large letters, and with it this account:— Thomas Gales, her nephew, when a child, was playing about in his father's printing-office, when one of the compositors set up in type and printed for the boy the foregoing admonition, which the latter took and gave to his schoolmistress; she kept it many years, and at her death it passed into the hands of another person, who sent it to Miss Gales, as above stated, long indeed after the time when to the subject of it the quietness of the grave had succeeded to the activity of a useful and honourable life, in the land of his adoption "beyond the western wave."

* They sailed from Liverpool August 26. 1796.

† "I do not know," said Charles Dibdin, in 1788, "how soon my friend Gales may make a fortune, which ultimately must inevitably happen, if unwearied industry, fair dealing, the world's regard, and a well-stocked head, as well as shop, are the materials to procure it."— *Tour*, p. 433. This vaticination, however it might be eventually realised in another hemisphere, was at the present moment singularly out of keeping with the eviction of the publisher of the "Sheffield Register."

sisters of the expatriated politician, immediately came to the shop in Hartshead, and continued the bookselling and stationery business, under the firm of "Anne and Elizabeth Gales." With these ladies, who were joined afterwards by their youngest sister, Sarah, Montgomery continued to reside, till death parted them from an inmate on whom, in all the trials of half-a-century — and longer than this in the case of the last survivor — they confidently, and never in vain relied, for the advice and assistance of a brother.

CHAP. XVI.

1795.

TRIAL AT DONCASTER.— JUDGES AND COUNSEL.—SPEECHES ON BOTH SIDES.—THE JURY AND THEIR VERDICT.—MOTION FOR ARREST OF JUDGMENT MADE AND REFUSED.—SENTENCE.—MONTGOMERY REMOVED TO YORK CASTLE.—ADDRESS TO THE PUBLIC.—CONVERSATIONS.—CURIOUS DOCUMENTS ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE PROSECUTION.—REMARKS UPON THEM.

At the Doncaster Quarter Sessions, held January 22. 1795, James Montgomery appeared to answer the outstanding indictment for libel; or, according to the "true bill" found against him by the grand jury, for "the several false, scandalous, malicious, and seditious libels," contained in the third verse of the song already given. The jurors also found, that "James Montgomery, printer, being a wicked, malicious, seditious, and evil-disposed person, and well knowing the premises, but wickedly, maliciously, and seditiously contriving, devising, and intending to stir up and excite discontent and sedition among his Majesty's subjects, and to alienate and withdraw the affection, fidelity, and allegiance of his said Majesty's subjects from his said Majesty; and unlawfully and wickedly to seduce and encourage his said Majesty's subjects to resist and oppose his said Majesty's government, and the said war," &c. When we read this egregious mass of verbiage as the delivery of "twelve honest Englishmen," and recollect that it does not contain one word of truth, there seems to be required for it something more than the soft apology that it is merely "an old legal formula." Montgomery found it something more, as

others had done. Michael Angelo Taylor, Esq., M.P., chairman; R. A. Athorpe, Esq., Bacon Frank, Esq., Rev. James Wilkinson, and Rev. J. Stovin, were the justices on the bench. The counsel for the crown were Mr. Tooker of Rotherham, Mr. Buck of Leeds, and Mr. Hill of Tadcaster; counsel for the defendant, Mr. Vaughan of London, and Mr. Markham, son of the Archbishop of York.

Mr. Hill having opened the indictment, Mr. Tooker rose and addressed the jury at considerable length; dwelling on the war as "just and necessary;" asserted the bearing of the song upon it; dwelt on the effects of the dissemination of libellous publications, and arguments in favour of parliamentary reform; adding, "these things had been too long suffered in that quarter whence the libel they were met to try proceeded." * He was going into a detail of the conduct of Mr. Gales; the principles "preached up in the 'Sheffield Register,'" &c., when he was interrupted by Mr. Vaughan, who contended that his client had nothing to do with Mr. Gales and his principles. Mr. Tooker having concluded his speech, Jordan, the song-seller, and Hall, the Sheffield constable, were examined at length, their evidence being, in substance, agreeable to the account already given in the words of Montgomery. Mr. Vaughan then rose on behalf of the defendant, and addressed the jury in a most brilliant and animated speech, which lasted about an hour and a half. He characterised the prosecution as "the last shift of men who, with eyes of the most malignant

* A striking illustration of the animus which inspired this allusion in the speech of the government prosecutor, was furnished by the fact, that on the 25th of July, 1794, the bail of a substantial citizen, burgess, and guild brother of Leith, in Scotland, was rejected, "because *he read the 'Iris!'*"

jealousy, had watched every step of his client; had pryed into all his actions, by day and by night: one of whom had declared, in a public company, that he had read the 'Iris,' a newspaper of which the defendant is the editor, *six times in one day*, to find a libel in it if possible—but no such libel was to be found." The learned counsel then argued at great length on the absurdity of seeking to construct a guilty intention on such an act as that of the printer. "Did his client foresee, or could any man in his senses ever dream of the mighty injury that was charged in the indictment; as intended to have been done by the publication of six quires of a song, printed long before the present war was ever thought of? My client was applied to by this Jordan, to print six quires of these songs, which he agreed to print for *eighteen pence!* Eighteen pence! six pennyworth of paper, six pennyworth of printing, and six pennyworth of profit! Good God! Will any man believe, in times like the present, when prosecutions are so frequent, and the punishment for libels so severe, that a man not out of his senses, would run his neck into such a noose for sixpence!—would hazard his liberty by publishing any thing that he conceived might be tortured into sedition for such a pitiful reward! Surely no! Where then is the intention specified in the indictment?"

After Mr. Vaughan sat down, a conversation ensued whether Mr. Tooker ought not to reply, as no witnesses were produced by the defendant, when it was determined by the court that Mr. Tooker was not entitled to the privilege of a reply.

Mr. M. A. Taylor then summed up the evidence, and delivered a charge to the jury, which, in fact, contained the reply which the court denied to Mr. Tooker.

The jury, after having been locked up for nearly an

hour*, returned into court with a verdict, "*guilty of printing and publishing*," which the court refused to accept; they again retired for fifty minutes longer, and then brought in their verdict, "GUILTY." Mr. Vaughan immediately rose, and addressed the court in arrest of judgment; but this motion, after considerable argument, was overruled, and the chairman sentenced the defendant *to suffer three months' imprisonment in the Castle of York, and to pay a fine of twenty pounds.* Montgomery, who had been allowed to return home, was the next day taken into custody, and conveyed by a messenger to York.

To this trial Montgomery often alluded in later life, in our conversations with him. On one occasion, when a remark was made on the length of time sometimes occupied in public meetings, an individual present said he had stood twelve hours without much fatigue, hearing debates in a popular assembly. Montgomery, referring to this trial, said, "I once sat nine hours in a court of justice, where my own case was pending. *Everett:* "You would, however, sit with feelings very different from those of a person listening to debates in which he had no interest beyond what was common to his fellow auditors." *Montgomery:* "Of course I did; but still, mine were far from painful emotions. It was not a case of life and death — I was the hero in those days — and on that occasion especially, experienced a high degree of excitement; indeed, a kind of bravado carried me forward. On the day after my trial, when I

* The worshipful head of corporation in a neighbouring town, having been hoaxed by a letter pretending to confer upon him the dignity of knighthood for his active and loud-spoken loyalty, our poet versified and printed the story under the title of "The Mayor of Donchester." The civic functionary to whom the rhymes were supposed to apply, happening to be in court when the jury had retired to find their verdict, said, "If I were one of them I should pronounce him guilty without so much loss of time."

stopped at an inn between Doncaster and York, to take tea with a lady and gentleman, the thought of leaving home, under such circumstances, seemed, for the first time, so oppressive, that I gave vent to tears and wept heartily." *Holland:* "Could you show me an original copy of the song?" *Montgomery:* "I do not possess one*: it was first published, as you are aware, by Mr. Gales, in the 'Register,' several months before the date of my offence, and I detached that number of the paper from the file to produce in evidence on my trial; but after laying it on the table, in court, I never saw it again. Immediately after my conviction, old Crome, a Sheffield ballad-printer, issued the obnoxious song with a mysterious substitution of asterisks for the verse on which the charge against me was founded, giving, in a note, a sly reason why he dare not reprint the whole! but this did not lead to a prosecution of the printer, an honour to which, as he said, he could never attain." *Holland:* "Had you really no misgiving, when you printed the song, that it might be actionable?" *Montgomery:* "None at all: I never was more innocent of any evil or questionable intention in my life."

Holland: "I have heard it said that when the chairman, on your trial, sent the jury back to reconsider their verdict, he wished them to have given a more favourable one."† *Montgomery:* "No, Sir; Taylor

* Many years afterwards, when he found a copy of the song, he presented it to Mr. Holland, observing, at the same time, that on reading it over, under the influence of present feelings and circumstances, he could hardly persuade himself that he had been prosecuted, imprisoned, and fined for the publication of the few harmless verses in question.

† So far was this magistrate, indeed, from being kindly disposed towards Montgomery on this occasion, that, as the latter afterwards informed us, he made a very unnecessary remark when he announced the judgment of the court: — "Mr. Montgomery,"

was no friend of mine." *Holland:* "I thought he might perhaps have been leniently disposed, as he was himself a Whig in politics." *Montgomery:* "He *was* a Whig; but you must recollect, that a Whig Member of Parliament arguing with his distinguished opponents in the House of Commons, and a Whig magistrate sitting on the bench, and trying a poor printer for libel, are very different cases. I still think this was one of the most unjust and unmerited prosecutions ever instituted, because I really intended no offence whatever. In my other prosecution, instituted by Mr. Athorpe, there was at least some pretext, because I had wounded the feelings of an individual, and that severely; although even there I had not knowingly said any thing but the truth."

Montgomery, at the period of the trial, was but just turned twenty-three years of age; and his case, altogether, was one of more than ordinary interest: an amiable and ingenious young man, whose unsuspecting conduct had betrayed him into an act which enabled his prosecutors

said he, "you are a young man, and for an offence like yours, you may think yourself well off that you are not ordered to stand in the pillory for an hour!" This impotent and gratuitous insult so offended Montgomery, that he resolved, should an opportunity occur, to retaliate. A short time afterwards, Mr. Taylor offered himself as a candidate for the representation of the county of York in Parliament: now was the time for Montgomery — he wrote a spirited and severe notice of the pretensions of the forensic aspirant; and actually had the temerity to publish this pasquinade in the "Iris," while he was under prosecution for the second indictment, which afterwards again subjected him to fine and imprisonment. This paragraph either never reached its object, or he was too wise to take any notice of it; for, after Montgomery's second conviction, when not experiencing all the enlargement which he had been promised in the Castle-yard, he wrote a letter to the magistrate, requesting his interference. The latter at once not only returned a polite answer, but immediately ordered the required perquisites and liberties to be allowed to the prisoner.

to punish him for the offences of another, and for which he was sentenced to suffer fine and imprisonment, while the ruin of a business, upon which he had recently entered, appeared to be contemplated and inevitable. He had, indeed, previously experienced vicissitudes and privations, and had endured some obloquy; but the horrors of a gaol were a climax of suffering, to which his delicate frame and, still more, his harassed and fervid mind were apparently very ill-suited. These miseries, however, were not wholly without alleviation; parties were found willing to manage his concerns; and the testimonies which were, in various ways, borne to his integrity, were alike creditable to himself and his friends.

It would be unpardonable not to notice, that, on the evening previous to his trial at Doncaster, an old man sought him out, not only for the purpose of administering consolation, but of offering him, had he required it, more substantial aid. This individual was no other than Mr. Hunt, of Wath, who, it will be recollected, had first received the fugitive when he ran away from Mirfield. This interview was truly affecting, "and will ever live in the remembrance of him who can forget an injury, but not a kindness; no father could have evinced a greater affection for a darling son; the tears he shed were honourable to his feelings, and were the best testimony to the conduct and integrity of James Montgomery."*

What his feelings, opinions, and employment were, during his incarceration, would have been a subject of speculation, had we not the means of giving this information in his own words, which, we doubt not, will be read with peculiar interest. In a letter, dated Castle of York, Jan. 25th, 1795, and published in

* Mirror.

the "Iris," Montgomery says: "My trial is now past. The issue is known. To a verdict of a jury of my countrymen it is my duty to bow with the deepest reverence—to the sentence of the law it is equally my duty to submit with silent resignation. It will be time enough to murmur and repine, when I am conscious of having merited punishment for real transgressions. I will not here, because it might be improper now, repeat what I solemnly declared in a late 'Iris;' neither will I retract it; for though I cheerfully resign myself to suffering, I need not yet blush for my intentions. The verdict of a jury may *pronounce* an innocent person 'Guilty;' but it will be remembered that a verdict cannot *make* him 'Guilty.' . . . .

"To a generous and sympathising public, which has been so exceedingly interested in my behalf, I owe a debt of gratitude which the future services of my whole life can never repay. I pledge myself never to relinquish the cause of liberty, justice, and humanity, whilst I possess any powers of mind or body that can be advantageous to my country.

"I should, however, be unworthy of the name of a man, if I did not, on the present occasion, feel the weight of the blow levelled against me; but I should be still more unworthy of that character, were I to sink under it. I do feel, but I will not sink. Though all the world should forsake me, this consolation can never fail me, that the great Searcher of Hearts, whose eye watches over every atom of the universe, knows every secret intention of my soul: and when at the bar of eternal justice this cause shall again be tried, I do indulge the humble hope that his approving voice shall confirm the verdict which I feel his finger has written upon my conscience.

"This hope shall bear me through my present mis-

fortune; this hope shall illuminate the walls of my prison; shall cheer my silent solitude, and wing the melancholy hours with comfort. Meanwhile, the few months of my captivity shall not be unprofitably spent. The 'Iris' shall be conducted upon the same firm, independent, and impartial principles which have secured to its editor so great a share of public patronage. Not long shall I be separated from my friends; their remembrance would shorten a much longer confinement. Soon shall I return to the bosom of society, and oh! may I never deserve worse, but infinitely better of my country, than I have hitherto done."

This letter displays a becoming spirit of firmness, moderation, and calmness; and its publication produced a very favourable impression on the minds of many persons not previously at all well disposed towards the writer. From the sympathy of his townspeople and others, he was constantly receiving every mitigation of which their kindness could render his punishment susceptible: inquiries after his health and wishes for his welfare were constantly and affectionately made; and it must have afforded him no small satisfaction to learn, that not only was the good will of his friends undiminished, but that the placability of his temper under this unprovoked and harsh discipline had increased their number amongst his townsmen.

A key to the motives and machinations of Montgomery's persecutors was curiously brought to light through the writer of this paragraph: The poet thus alludes to the subject. "In the spring of 1839, a packet was put into my hands containing several of the original documents connected with my trial for a seditious libel at Doncaster, in 1795. Among these there is a letter, signed by the Duke of Portland, his Majesty's Secretary of State for the Home Department, addressed to a ma-

gistrate of this neighbourhood (Sheffield), apparently in answer to a communication from the latter, wherein his Grace approves of the several steps taken against the song-seller and myself, accompanied by some statesman-like hints respecting further proceedings. There are several letters from Mr. White, the Solicitor to the Treasury, to the attorney for the prosecution here [Mr. Brookfield]; in one of which the latter is authorised to give briefs to three counsel named, 'with the Attorney-General's compliments.' Thus I learned that I had actually suffered—not to say enjoyed—the honour of a state prosecution. Another document is the Sheffield solicitor's bill of costs, at full length, indorsed, '*Rex* v. *Montgomery*. *G. B.'s bill, 66l. 8s. 2d.: Mr. White paid this.*' What Mr. White himself, and the Attorney-General, afterwards Lord Eldon, received, I know not. There are several other memoranda of no signification now. But the most precious of these ancient manuscripts, rescued as unexpectedly from hopeless perdition as any classic treasure from the ruins of Herculaneum, is *a fragment of the original draft of the brief* delivered to the counsel for the prosecution. From this I make the following extract. After some high-seasoned vituperation of my predecessor, the scribe proceeds thus:—

"'The prisoner (myself) for a long time acted as his (Mr. G.'s) amanuensis,'—the next seven words express an after-thought, being interpolated in the draft,—'and occasionally wrote essays for the newspaper.' Since he has been the ostensible manager and proprietor of the 'Iris,' he has pursued the same line of conduct, and his printing office has been precisely of the same stamp.' This refers to a charge in a foregoing clause, respecting Mr. G.'s office, that from it 'all the inflammatory and seditious resolutions, pamph-

lets, and papers issued' of the political societies in Sheffield. The paragraph goes on, referring to myself: 'Without calling in question the names or characters of some of his principal supporters who ought to act differently, suffice it to say, that *this* prosecution is carried on *chiefly* with a view of *putting a stop to the meetings of the associated clubs in Sheffield;* and it is hoped that if we are fortunate enough to succeed in convicting the prisoner, it will go a great way towards curbing the insolence they have uniformly manifested, and particularly since the late acquittals.' Thus," concludes Montgomery, "after the lapse of nearly half a century, the true key to the measures of my adversaries against me is found:" * and thus, it may be added, do the "side-lights of history" become instructive and important.*

* Works, p. 140.

CHAP. XVII.

1795.

MONTGOMERY AND THE GAOLER. — THE "ENTHUSIAST" RESUMED. — REDHEAD YORKE. — VERSES "TO CELIA." — ADDRESS FROM DEBATING SOCIETY, AND THE POET'S ANSWER. — HIS RELEASE FROM PRISON. — ADDRESS TO THE READERS OF THE "IRIS." — THE "WHISPERER." — PUBLICATION AND SUPPRESSION OF THE VOLUME. — CONVERSATION RELATIVE TO IT. — ARCHDEACON WRANGHAM'S COPY. — BURLESQUE WRITING. — DISSOLUTION OF PARTNERSHIP.

He had not been long "in residence" at York, before he learnt that he might, on soliciting the governor, have the privilege of walking in the Castle-yard. Not feeling inclined to ask a favour in that quarter, he contented himself with the prescribed morning perambulations, and his progress to and from the place of worship (then the Court Room, a fire having just before taken place in the Chapel). One morning, during service, Montgomery noticed, incidentally, that he was an object of some curiosity to two strange gentlemen who had got into the Court Room. Soon after his return to his "den," as he termed the cell, Mr. Clayton*, the keeper of the Castle, came in, and addressed the poet in terms so much obscured by the vehemence with which he spoke that it was some time before Montgomery could com-

* This person, who was for many years the governor of York Castle, had originally gone there, in the first place, as a debtor from Sheffield, passing, after his enlargement, through various subordinate situations of trust to the responsible office alluded to.

prehend the relation in which he stood to the matter of Mr. Turnkey's wrath. It turned out, however, that his object was to apologise to his prisoner for the manner in which he understood the latter had been insulted during Divine service that morning, ending with the expression of free leave to him to walk in the yard, a privilege of which he thenceforward constantly availed himself. Who the strangers were, or whether they had really in any way misconducted themselves, was never otherwise known to Montgomery; but to the report that they had done so he was indebted for a favour which formed no small ingredient in what might be called his prison comforts.

Amongst other amusements of his prison hours, he resumed the composition of a series of essays, entitled the "Enthusiast." "After a silence of five months," says he, "I have found my tongue again, and in a place of great security too, under the sure protection of lock and key. Now, when a person gets fairly over head and ears in a prison, he has nothing else to do but to make himself as merry and as comfortable as he can." He then proceeds, in a somewhat jocose strain, to descant on the brevity of life, and the folly of making it still more brief by neglecting to enjoy what *we may*, because we cannot enjoy what *we would*, which he thus humorously illustrates: — "Because life is short, you will not enjoy it; because a glass of wine does not contain a gallon, you will perish for thirst rather than drink it! When I was a child I broke the bones of my hobby-horse because it was not a race-horse; and what do you think I did next? Why, sir, I sat down and cried my heart out of my eyes, because I had neither the wooden nor the living horse! Now this was acting like a man — at least such a man as you are. My good grandmother, a notable interpreter of dreams and omens, laid

down her prayer-book, took off her spectacles, and casting *such* a look, first at me, and then at the poker, whilst she smote her breast, with inimitable pathos, exclaimed, "*My Moonshine was never made for* this *world!*" My pious grandmother was woefully mistaken in this, as well as in many other matters respecting me. For, upon my conscience, I have lived in the world to this very day, and have found so many high roads and by-paths, so many mountains, valleys, rocks, rivers, lakes, seas, forests, deserts, gardens, glades, meadows, ups and downs, heres and theres, straight and curved lines, points, angles, triangles, circles, squares, superficies, and a thousand other *et cætera*, that I am sometimes inclined to despair of ever finding my way out again." In this manner could he occasionally trifle amidst the gloom and solitude of a prison; but this was an affected and fictitious hilarity, courted and indulged only to beguile the heart from the contemplation and pressure of real grief.

At this time, Henry Redhead Yorke was confined in the Castle on a committal for high treason: on this charge being abandoned for the minor one of sedition, the offender, while he lost by the change what was very important to him—six-and-eightpence a day for his maintenance—obtained a degree of enlargement, which enabled him to visit Montgomery in *his* room. On one of these occasions, he asked the poet what book he was reading. "Gil Blas," was the reply. "Ah!" said Yorke, taking up the volume, and turning to the second chapter, where the hero gives so amusing an account of his supper and of his companion in the town of Pennaflor, "I have resembled that simple fool Signor Gil Blas de Santillane in his conduct at the inn—spoiled by the extravagant flattery of parasites and hypocrites, none of whom had the honesty of

the Cavalier in seeking to make me the wiser for their tricks; but I have read the lesson to myself." A person from Leeds having just at this moment called to see Montgomery, beckoned him aside, and asked him whether he thought Yorke needed and would accept of pecuniary assistance? The reply being in the affirmative, he gave Montgomery five guineas, which the latter handed to Yorke, who received the money with a gush of tears, which showed, as the relator said to us, that "he had a heart after all."

To the inquiries of a friend, Montgomery thus replies in a letter:—"To your kind queries I answer, that I have been very much indisposed all the last week, but am considerably better now. I use as much exercise as I can in my room, and, notwithstanding the severity of the season, generally keep my window open all day; and, indeed, spend many hours at it, admiring the very pretty prospect into the country which lies before it. I have particularly fallen very deeply in love with a *wooden windmill,* which, though at the distance of two miles, is very amusing company to me, and preaches very emphatically *de vanitate mundi et fuga seculorum.**

Among other expressions of sympathy, he received a consolatory letter, of a sober and judicious character, written by an unknown individual, and signed *Celia.* To this effusion he replied in a copy of verses, which are not printed in his works, though not altogether unworthy of preservation in this place:—

"*To Celia.*

"Where sorrow and solitude reign,
Reclined on my elbow I sit,
And turn o'er the leaves of my brain,
But can neither find comfort nor wit.

* Concerning the vanity of the world and the flight of time.

My Robin, poor fellow! too soon
Returned to the green budding grove,
And, clearing his pipe into tune,
The pretty rogue's fall'n into love.

"In his mate and his little ones blest,
How merry the warbler will be!
He'll perch near his moss-woven nest,
And carol a song about me.
Next winter when tempests awake,
He'll peck at yon window in vain,
Sweet Robin! almost for thy sake,
I shall sigh for my prison again.

"Hark! — shrill, and sonorous around,
The trumpet's dread summons I hear *,
Death's voice in the blood chilling sound
Assaults the pale murderer's ear.
What horror must stiffen his veins!
At the pomp and the thunder of law,
Guilt shudders and clings to his chains;
E'en innocence trembles with awe.

"Such mournful reflections as these,
To agony turned every thought;
When lo! at the music of keys
I start — and a letter is brought!—
O Celia! how soothing your art!
So sweetly pathetic you write,
Every syllable steals to the heart,
And melts it with pensive delight.

"The nightingale sitting forlorn,
Whose music enamours the vale,
Leans his breast on the point of the thorn,
While telling his eloquent tale.

* Every morning during the assizes trumpets proclaim the entrance of the judges. These lines were written on the day when Celia's letter was received, and just at the time when sentence of death had been pronounced upon a murderer, and his wife, in violent fits, was carried by near the window of the writer.

His feelings this moment are mine,
And O! could I borrow his strain,
Even bright as my numbers would shine,
They would rival your letter in vain.

"Your beautiful letter, replete
With elegance, modesty, ease!
Soft graces! how seldom they meet,
But oh! when they meet, how they please!
The charms of your delicate mind,
So fair in this mirror are shown,—
One fault, and one only, I find —
Dear Celia! why are you unknown?

"Castle of York, March 7. 1795."

As the appeal in the concluding line of these verses produced no immediate response, and as Montgomery never afterwards heard anything of this pseudonymous friend, he ultimately inclined to the conclusion that it was some person of his own sex, the import of the signature to the contrary notwithstanding.

*Debating Societies**, as they were called, were very numerous about this period. Their design, when not political, was, that the members should occasionally, or statedly, meet together for the purpose of discussing subjects connected with morality, literature, and science. One of these associations existed at Sheffield, and was denominated, the "Society of the Friends of Literature;" of this Montgomery was a member. During his imprisonment they prepared and transmitted an address to him, of which the following is the concluding

* These societies were soon afterwards suppressed by order of government; for political topics becoming the subjects of discussion, they were considered as seminaries of disloyalty and sedition: but many of the master-spirits of the multitude received a bias in these meetings, which influenced their good as well as their evil genius through life.

paragraph :—" Be assured, Sir, that we esteem you as a brother, torn from us for awhile by the strong hand of the law; and we anxiously look forward to the time when you shall emerge from your cell, and return to the bosom of your friends. Though that time be but comparatively short, we are well aware that the moments are cheerless and languid which are passed within the dreary confines of a prison. Yet, as an anchor to rest upon, we wish you to keep in mind, that it is better to be sentenced for a supposed crime, and be innocent, than to be acquitted of a real one, and be guilty. GOD, TRUTH, and CONSCIENCE are for you; who, then, can be against you? Your sentence is an eulogy, your prison is a palace."

This Address was signed by John Pye Smith*, as President of the Society. Montgomery in reply, says: " GENTLEMEN, I am equally unaccustomed to pay or to receive compliments. Friendship disclaims all idle forms of words, and flowing *from* the heart, speaks only *to* the heart; accept therefore, in one word, my THANKS for the sympathising and cordial address which you have so generously voted to a suffering brother. The approbation of those persons who compose the Society of FRIENDS OF LITERATURE would be highly gratifying to the man of sensibility, even in the happiest and brightest periods of his life. To a person like me, languishing in solitude, it yields the most delightful and affecting consolation. Present griefs vanish between the memory of past and the anticipation of future enjoyments. . . . .

" The generous and affecting conclusion of your Address has made a deep impression upon my heart.

* Afterwards well known and esteemed as a theological tutor and writer. We shall presently meet with his name again.

Whilst *you* entertain such sentiments of my conduct, I have no reason to complain of my lot, severe as it may seem. I am cheerful, I am happy under it. But oh! how much more happy will be the day when I shall again return, if health permit, to your peaceful community, to renew in your society, and with your assistance, the pleasing pursuits of elegant, rational, and moral improvement in the arts that adorn, the sciences that enlighten, and the virtues that enlarge the soul; pursuits far more congenial to the tenor of my mind than the bustle of public strife, or the dissonance of party politics."

On the 16th of April, Montgomery was released from his captivity in the Castle of York; and in a few days found himself once more in the bosom of his friends, and filling his editorial situation in Sheffield. Spring was dropping her flowers, and breathing sweets around; and these new-born delights of the vernal season the poet enjoyed with an exquisite relish at all times—how much more under present circumstances! A curious mistake connected with the history of his restoration to personal freedom has been published. In the "Table Talk" of William Hazlitt (vol. i. p. 371.) occurs the following passage:—"Mr. Montgomery, the ingenious and amiable poet, after he had been shut up in solitary confinement for a year and a half for printing the Duke of Richmond's Letter on Reform, when he first walked out in the narrow path of the adjoining field was seized with an apprehension that he should fall over it; as if he had trod on the brink of an abrupt precipice." Thus far the essayist. "Now," says the poet, in a memorandum with which he favoured us, and afterwards printed, "there is not one expression of pure fact in this anecdote, which, nevertheless, was intended to be the truth throughout, believed to be so, and published to

excite compassion towards the sufferer. I *never* printed the Duke of Richmond's Letter on Reform*; I was *never* shut up for a year and a half in solitary confinement; and I *never* felt any fear of falling over the edge of a narrow path through a flat field. It might be concluded from the foregoing story that I had been immured in a dark cell, and loaded with chains, till my eye could not bear the light without giddiness, and my limbs were paralysed for want of exercise. The iron did, indeed, 'enter into my *soul*,' but it went no *further*, —it never touched my *person*—the nearest part of a man to himself under some circumstances. It is true that I was twice imprisoned, for three and six months, in the course of 'a year and a half.' Now, during the first term, the room which I occupied overlooked the Castle walls, and gave me ample views of the adjacent country, then passing through the changes of aspect which Nature assumes from the depth and forlornness of winter to the first blooms of a promising spring. From my window I was daily in the habit of marking these, and dwelt with peculiar delight on the well-known walk by the river Ouse, where stood a long range of full-grown trees, beyond which, on the left hand, lay certain pasture fields that led towards a wooden windmill, propt upon one leg, on a little eminence; and the motion and configuration of whose arms, as the body was occasionally turned about, east, west, north, and south, to meet the wind from every point, proved the source of very humble but very dear pleasure to one with whom it was even as a living

* In 1794, Daniel Holt, a printer of Newark, was imprisoned two years for *republishing* a handbill which Mr. Pitt and the Duke of Richmond had printed, advocating a Reform in Parliament. It was evidently some recollection of this transaction which was mixed up in Hazlitt's mind with the case of Montgomery.

thing,—the companion of his eye and the inspirer of his thoughts, having more than once suggested grave meditations on the vanity of the world, and the flight of time.

"During such reveries, I often purposed that my first ramble, on recovery of my freedom, should be down by that river, under those trees, across the fields beyond, and away to the windmill. And so it came to pass. One fine morning, in the middle of April, I was liberated. Immediately afterwards I sallied forth, and took my walk in that direction,—from whence, with feelings which none but an emancipated captive can fully understand, I looked *back* upon the Castle walls, and *to* the window of that very chamber *from* which I had been accustomed to look *forward*, both with the eye and with hope, upon the ground which I was now treading, with a spring in my step as though the very soil were elastic under my feet. While I was thus traversing the fields, not with any apprehension of falling over the verge of the narrow footpath, but from mere wantonness of instinct, in the joy of liberty long wished for, and, though late, come at last, I *wilfully* diverged from the track, crossing it now to the right, then to the left, like a butterfly fluttering here and there, making a long course and little way, just to prove my legs, that they were no longer under restraint, but might tread *where* and *how* they pleased; and that I myself was in reality *abroad* again in the world,—not gazing at a section of landscape over stone walls that might not be scaled; nor, when, in the Castle-yard, the ponderous gates, or the small wicket, happened to be opened to let in or let out visitors or captives, looking up the street from a particular point which might not be passed. Now to some wise people this may appear very childish, even in such a stripling

as I then was; but the feeling was pure and natural; and the expression innocent and graceful, as every unsophisticated emotion and its spontaneous manifestation must be; however much, on cool reflection, a prudent man, with the eyes of all the world upon him, might choose to conceal the one and repress the other. Be this as it may, having once or twice mentioned the frolic in company, I know not through how many mouths it may have transmigrated before it reached Mr. Hazlitt in the form under which he has presented it."

On the 23rd of April, the editor of the Iris paid his respects to the public through the medium of that paper. This article is written with admirable temper; and if the trial itself could or ought to be forgotten by others, doubtless Montgomery would have been the last to wish that it should ever be recalled; and the authors of these pages might have felt equally loth to awake a painful remembrance. It is, however, too prominent and notorious a feature in the early life of Montgomery, and too indicative of the spirit of the times in which he lived, to be hastily passed over: —

"After having repeatedly troubled the public upon the subject of my late prosecution, I feel pleasure in the hope, that this may be the last occasion which shall require me to awaken the memory of that event in the minds of the readers of the 'Iris.' I come not forward now to complain of wrongs, of injuries, or of oppression. I do not intend to represent myself as the victim of private malice and private interest. I will not censure the verdict of an English jury. Yet after having severely suffered under the sentence of the law, I can with equal truth and sincerity declare that the weight of my misfortune has not been aggravated by the consciousness of guilt. And, although my innocence had remained for ever unknown, or unacknowledged by all the world, yet the

clear conviction of having always endeavoured to act upon honest and liberal principles, would alone have animated and supported me under deeper afflictions than even those which have lately surrounded me. If, during the period of my punishment, I have passed some melancholy hours; if I have even sometimes, in the bitterness of low spirits, repined and murmured at my lot, it was not that the gloom of a prison, or the horrors of solitude, awoke any pangs of remorse for past offences, or any agonising apprehensions, lest undivulged crimes might yet burst into light, and overwhelm me in confusion and despair; but all the uneasy sensations I occasionally felt proceeded from the natural infirmities of a weak irritable disposition. Had I been really guilty, a dungeon would have been a welcome asylum. There, in silence and darkness, I would have retired to hide my infamy from the world, and, if possible, even from myself. Nay, I would rather have gone down into an untimely grave, than dared again to disturb, with my presence, the peaceful circle of society, from which I have been undeservingly banished. But it was otherwise with me. The generous sympathy of many, very many friends, the prevailing sentiment of the public concerning my conduct, and my misfortune, and the conscious approbation of my own heart rendered my confinement less irksome, and far more agreeable than I could have expected. As I feel no reason to blush for its cause, I shall never regret my imprisonment. I have no wish to complain of any temporary inconveniences or mortifications to which my late prosecution has exposed me: for even my enemies have triumphed less over my fall than I could have hoped from their former disposition towards me, while the generous indulgence and esteem, however little merited, of the humane and the virtuous, have most abundantly compensated for all my sufferings. One solicitude only remains, and while gratitude glows in my heart the solicitude will for ever remain, that I may not prove myself unworthy of that share of public and private kindness which I have experienced in my prison, and which has met me on my return.

"I now more than ever feel it to be my duty to devote

my best abilities, small as they are, to the obedience of my God, and to the service of my friends and my country! My judgment may possibly mislead me, but, while I have no other aim in the exercise of it than to arrive at *truth*, I will not fear any consequences which may follow from pursuing the best dictates of my heart. I am not conscious of being influenced by any of those violent principles which have been imputed to me: on the other hand, I detest the spirit of party wherever it appears. And, whilst I hope I can make reasonable allowances for the prejudices of others, I am determined never to sacrifice to those prejudices, on any side of any question, the independence of my own mind. Whatever some persons may say or think of me, no man is a firmer friend either to his king or his country than myself. But I look upon loyalty and patriotism, to be best evinced by supporting such measures, and such only, as have a tendency to rectify abuses, and to establish the true honour and happiness of Britain on the solid basis of JUSTICE, PEACE, and LIBERTY. . . . . All private resentment and animosity, against those who have hitherto been my enemies and persecutors, I have left behind in my prison; and may they never escape thence! If I cannot obtain, I will, at least, endeavour to deserve, the public favour. If I fail of success, I shall still console myself with the idea that there has been a time when I not only served but suffered for my country.

"J. MONTGOMERY."

Finding, we presume, that it might be dangerous to hold the high tone of an "ENTHUSIAST," in which character some of his friends thought they could occasionally perceive a playfully-sketched portrait of the mind of Montgomery himself, he commenced at this period a new series of essays, under the designation of "The Whisperer, or Hints and Speculations, by Gabriel Silvertongue, Gent.,"* with a motto from Propertius,—

* "The 'Whisperer' is at present in the hands of my partner and myself: the first essay was the joint production of both our heads

"*Blandos audire susurros.*" These lucubrations were afterwards collected by the author, and published in a volume, "By J. Johnson, Saint Paul's Church Yard, London, 1798." We shall here anticipate a little the order of time, to notice a few circumstances connected with the history of this work.

However interested persons in general are about the secresy supposed to pertain to *whispering*, this volume was not extensively circulated; hence, while the "Prison Amusements" are frequently to be met with in indifferent hands, these susurrant essays, being of a less popular cast, are not to be found except in the book-cases of a few particular friends of the writer; nor perhaps would it now be possible to obtain a set at any price. This scarcity, as will appear from the following conversations, originated almost entirely with Montgomery himself. *Everett:* "Do you think, sir, it is within the reach of possibility to procure a copy of the 'Whisperer?'" *Montgomery:* "I do not think it is; and if I had one, I would not give it to you." *Everett:* "But if a gift be out of the question, could one be purchased?" *Montgomery:* "The work is not, I believe, to be met with at any price,—if it was, I should willingly pay for copies, and burn them. A great buyer of rare and curious books * told me that he had been in quest of a 'Whisperer' for three years, and could not succeed; he at length laid his hand on a mutilated copy, and requested me to enable him to supply the deficiencies in his transcript. I told him that as he had procured the

and hands, and if any future paper should be marked X, it will stand in the same predicament. The third paper, marked S, and all in future signed with any of the letters in SOPHRON, will be the production of my partner."—*Letter to Aston*, June 22. 1795.

* The late Rev. and Ven. Francis Wrangham, Archdeacon of Cleveland, a true lover of rare books.

greater part, and I could not prevent him from retaining it, he should have a perfect book; and I gave him the last I had, with the exception of one which is so blotted, crossed, and otherwise written upon, that should it survive me, which is not likely, nobody will be able to make it out; and that escaped volume he possesses." *Holland:* "I offered seven shillings for a mutilated copy of the 'Prison Amusements,' a few days since; but the owner would not part with it at any price, and much less with a copy of the 'Whisperer,' which he also showed me." *Montgomery:* "If I have a duplicate of the former I will give it to you. I sent one to Mr. Wrangham." *Holland:* "Was the 'Whisperer' issued from your office, without your name either as author, printer, or publisher?" *Montgomery:* "I only inserted Johnson's name on the title-page, as it was not at that time required by the law that any other should be there. I printed 500 copies." *Everett:* "What became of the bulk of the edition?" *Montgomery:* "I sent fifty copies to Sir Richard Phillips, for which he never accounted to me; I suppose they were sold at his bankruptcy: and I disposed of about fifty more in Sheffield." *Everett:* "And what of the remainder?" *Montgomery:* "I told Miss E. Gales that I would give them to her, if she could dispose of them as waste paper, in any way that might secure their destruction. She sold them to a poulterer to singe fowls with! And for that purpose," continued he, significantly, "Mrs. D'Amour* said they were admirably adapted, being

* Her husband, a native of Antwerp, had lived, when young, in service at Gordon Castle, and told a number of anecdotes of the various illustrious personages whom he had seen there. In 1836, "Memoirs of Mr. Matthias D'Amour," a volume of 215 pages, was published at Sheffield, and dedicated to "James Montgomery, Esq., the ornament of literature, the patron of humble

printed on good writing-paper, made from linen rags." *Holland:* "That was certainly somewhat in the Caliph Omar's manner of taking vengeance of offensive books." On another occasion, when taking tea with Montgomery, at the house of Mr. T. Branson, solicitor, the subject was again introduced. *Holland:* "I have a copy of the 'Whisperer' by me, which I am to retain for an indefinite period; and I have been reading to-day the paper entitled the 'Cottage.'" *Montgomery:* "Do you mean the 'Siege of the Cottage?' I wrote that when I was about nineteen years of age." *Holland:* "No, sir; I mean that 'Cottage' which you have rendered so affecting as containing a death-bed scene." *Montgomery:* "I certainly wrote it in what I thought my best manner at that time. The out-door scene is laid in this neighbourhood." *Everett:* "I have always thought so. My imagination has often identified the landscape on the edge of the moors, about five miles west of Sheffield, with the graphic delineations of your pen in the 'Cottage' story." Here the author's countenance brightened, and his eyes sparkled with pleasing surprise, as though some delightful emotions had been awakened in his breast; he was evidently glad that the glowing description was sufficiently accurate to be thus realised, and said, "Aye, how came you to know that?" *Everett:* "You seem scarcely to give me credit for making the discovery; yet who that is well acquainted with the neighbourhood, can help fixing upon the very spot referred to?" *Montgomery:* "Well, that is singular; and I am glad you have named it. Near the five-mile stone, in the situation you describe, is certainly

merit, and the friend of all men; by his obliged and obedient servants, Matthias D'Amour and Paul Rodgers." The latter, ostensibly the amanuensis of the worthy ex-poulterer, was really the author of the book.

the identical spot I had in my mind when I wrote that paper." Turning to Mr. Holland, he asked, "Will you send me that copy of the 'Whisperer' which you possess?" *Holland:* "With pleasure, sir, if you will promise it safe conduct back again." *Montgomery:* "I will promise you to burn it." *Holland:* "Then I promise you, you shall not have it. Mr. Everett, there, could scarcely forgive Mrs. E. because she objected to copy the whole volume with a pen!" *Montgomery:* "I should hardly have forgiven her if she *had* done so." *Everett:* "I have commenced the work myself." *Montgomery:* "You might be much better employed." *Everett:* "As you once told me that Archdeacon Wrangham had *two* copies, a mutilated and a perfect one, I spoke to the Rev. Francis Hall to endeavour to procure for me the former, and have a faint hope of obtaining it." *Montgomery:* "You will not succeed. I sent Mr. W. a perfect copy, trusting to his word of honour to burn the other, according to my request; and he afterwards informed me he had done so.* It is a little remarkable, that, while he was lingering over the fire with the book, he thought he would compare them; and fortunate it was for him that he did so, for the copy which I gave him wanted two leaves, which the mutilated one contained: these, of course, were reserved." *Everett:* "In reference to that quarter, then, mine is not barely hope deferred, but hope destroyed." *Montgomery:* "The

* "DEAR SIR,—You may *rely* upon my burning the fragment in my possession, unless you would rather, when you come (as *per* engagement) to visit us next summer, attend the pyre yourself. Pray let the remaining part of the volume be sent by some *early* opportunity, sealed up: it will reach me (I doubt not) safely. Your obliged and faithful friend, F. WRANGHAM.—*Multos et felices.* —Humanby, Dec. 25. 1820.

"J. Montgomery, Esq., Sheffield."

copy which I possess, and the interlineations in which I alone can decipher, I purpose some day to destroy; but it will probably be one of my last acts, as I wish to keep it a little longer by me, as something might occur which would require a reference to it. My publishers have often importuned me to furnish them with matter for a volume of *prose*, and some of the papers, new modelled, might then be employed. When the 'Whisperer' was written, I was bewildered in a fondness for burlesque writing, but I was happily soon saved from it." *Holland:* "You would probably have succeeded in that style if you had cultivated your talent in it." *Montgomery:* "It is at the best a dangerous talent, and success is not often attended with credit."

It was some time about 1790, that Montgomery began to yield to this disposition to imitate humorous and burlesque authors: taking for his models in verse La Fontaine, and Hall Stevenson the prototype of Peter Pindar. He happily soon returned to the higher and purer walks of poetry, in which he ever afterwards continued; always speaking with evident disgust of "Crazy Tales, and other abominable productions" by the same hand. He apologised on one occasion at a public meeting, when giving a quotation from the facetious and profane Rabelais, for being thus found in company with the author of "that strange and incoherent romance, the 'History of Gargantua and Pantagruel,'—a satire on priests, popes, fools, and knaves." Though the playfulness observable in the "Whisperer" did not comport with the gravity of his maturer years, his chief moral objection to it arose from the apparent levity occasionally manifested in the application of texts of Scripture.

The proprietorship of the "Iris," up to July 3rd, 1795, had been a co-partnery between James Mont-

gomery and Benjamin Naylor; a dissolution of which now took place, and devolved the sole responsibility of the paper on the former. The ostensible, and probably, on Naylor's part, the real ground of this early separation was, that he had fallen in love with and was anxious to marry a young lady, whose friends made their consent conditional on his giving up his connection with the "Iris." Although it would only have been fair, under ordinary circumstances, for the voluntarily outgoing partner to have borne some portion of the losses of the concern, he did not do so in this case. Montgomery, indeed, considered that 900*l.* was more nearly the value of the property at this time than 1600*l.*, yet, as the latter sum had been at first paid for it, an engagement was given for the money; and although the purchaser considered the terms somewhat hard, a few years of industry and prosperity enabled him to liquidate the bond.

CHAP. XVIII.

1795.

REFORMERS OF 1794 AND 1832. — STATE OF THINGS IN SHEFFIELD AT THE FORMER PERIOD. — RIOT IN THE STREETS, AND FATAL MILITARY INTERFERENCE. — ACCOUNT OF THE AFFAIR IN THE "IRIS." — ANONYMOUS SLANDERER. — MONTGOMERY CHARGED WITH A LIBEL ON COLONEL ATHORPE. — LETTER TO ASTON. — HYMN ON THE FOUNDATION OF CLUB MILL. — CLOSING YEAR'S ADDRESS IN THE "IRIS."

WHATEVER opinions may be entertained on the politics of the period to which our attention has just been directed, or however the part which Montgomery took, or was charged with taking in the movement, may be applauded or condemned, no inference can be more unfair than that which assumes to justify the Reformers of 1794 by the passing of the Reform Bill in 1832. It is evident that may be remedial in one state of things, which may be destructive in another. And in the body politic, as in the human constitution, a "knowledge of the disease" is not more necessary than a consideration of the state of the patient; and the surgeon who should attempt to perform a capital operation in the midst of high fever, would be at least as guilty of *mala praxis* as he who should lose the life entrusted to him through negligence or timidity. The supplantation of James II. by William III. in the throne of these realms was, in reality, as it is commonly called, a "Glorious Revolution;" and mercury is, in truth as well as in terms, a "heroic" medicine;

but the former ought no more to be emulated than the latter ought to be "exhibited" in every case. Whether the state doctors of the former or the latter of the above-mentioned periods were most skilful, we need not decide—history has recorded which were most successful.

That picture of the political state of the town of Sheffield which we have previously attempted to sketch, and which is strikingly portrayed in the "State Trials," was at this time constantly present to the view, and in still more glowing colours to the imaginations, of persons who were the friends of good order in general, as well as those who were officially entrusted with the preservation of the peace of the place. Apprehensions of tumult, from the dearness of provisions, the lamentable want of trade, and the irritating presence of the military, were constantly entertained. "Suspicion, distrust, and hatred, took place for a time of that friendly and unanimous spirit, and that absence of bigotry, religious or political, which in better times had honourably distinguished the inhabitants of Sheffield; accidental circumstances contributed to inflame political jealousies; and, on one melancholy occasion, a volunteer corps, which had been raised in the town, were drawn out in the streets, when two of their townsmen were killed by a discharge of musketry." *

This serious affair, so aggravating to the social mistrust, was not likely to pass quietly over; neighbour had hastily shed his neighbour's blood; and the guilt of this sad affair popular indignation was not slow in charging upon the commanding officer. In this sentiment, Montgomery, in an article which we shall presently quote, was unfortunately conceived to concur. He had, a few weeks before, when describing the im-

* Hunter's Hallamshire, p. 128.

posing military spectacle of a mock engagement on a neighbouring moor, expressed "a fervent wish that every field of action in future may prove as bloodless and innocent as Brinsworth Common; that our countrymen may never find any other use for their weapons, than to brandish them in the sun and fire them in the air, as they did upon this memorable day; that every battle may be fought in the presence of the ladies; and that those ladies may feel only such honourable sensations as they felt in beholding this conflict. We feel no prejudice against the military dress, but we cannot help thinking that it is a pity to defile such elegant habiliments with blood." Alas! that this deprecation of conflict—this prophecy of hope—was not realised! but that the blood and the lives of their townsmen should ever have tarnished with a stain those weapons which otherwise had been, after twenty years of honourable possession, resigned in their guiltless and maiden lustre to rust and oblivion, when the men who had wielded them ceased to be a regiment! The account of the disturbance alluded to must now be given in Montgomery's own words, as it appeared in the "Iris" of August 7th:—

"On Tuesday evening, a disturbance, trifling indeed in its commencement, but dreadful in its progress, and fatal in its consequences, happened in this town. The privates of Colonel Cameron's newly raised regiment refused to disperse after the evening exercise. The colonel remonstrated with them upon the impropriety of their conduct, but the men in return complained that part of their bounty-money had been hitherto withheld, and arrears of their pay were due. Of the justice of this complaint we cannot pretend to speak; but in consequence of this circumstance, a number of people assembled in Norfolk Street, and upon the parade. *R. A. Athorpe, Esq., Colonel of the Volunteers, who had been pre-*

viously ordered to hold themselves in readiness, now appeared at their head, and, in a peremptory tone, commanded the people instantly to disperse, which not being immediately complied with, a person, who shall be nameless, plunged with his horse among the unarmed, defenceless people, and wounded with his sword men, women, and children promiscuously. The people murmured, and fell back in confusion. The Riot Act was read. The people ran to and fro, scarcely one in a hundred knowing what was meant by these dreadful measures; when, an hour being expired, the volunteers fired upon their townsmen with *bullets*, and killed two persons upon the spot*; several others were wounded, and the rest fled on every side in consternation. The whole town was alarmed, and continued in a state of agitation all night long. It is our duty to say, that, during the whole of this bloody business, no violence was committed upon any man's person or property by the people, no symptoms of a riotous disposition were manifested, except by some enraged individuals, who threw a few stones, by which several of the volunteers were bruised."

On the appearance of this statement, collected, as the facts were, amidst all the consternation and ill-feeling produced by such an event, and published after an interval of only one day, Montgomery was assailed by

* Joe Mather, a coarse local poetaster, and not, it seems, worth a prosecution, thus alluded at the time to the doings of the Colonel and his soldiers in this fatal fray:—

"This armed banditti, filled with spleen,
At his command, like bloodhounds keen,
In fine, to crown the horrid scene,
A shower of bullets fired;
The consequence was deep distress,
More widows, and more fatherless;
The Devil blush'd, and did confess,
'T was more than he required!"

We have heard Montgomery advert to the striking sentiment in the last two lines of the stanza.

a torrent of abuse in the "Courant" newspaper for some weeks: the anonymous writer of these scurrilities provoked from the Editor of the "Iris" more keenness and personal altercation than he ever manifested on any similar occasion. The truth was, a prosecution for libel was threatened against Montgomery for the publication of the foregoing account: and the person who had the cruelty to taunt him with his imprisonment, and the meanness to shelter, behind an initial, a name not unguessed and an enmity not unfelt by Montgomery, was striving by every means in his power to irritate the wound which, however unintentionally, was said to have been inflicted on a military officer, acting in his public character.

Adverting to this affair several years after, he observed, "I was looking over the papers the other day, in which the controversy respecting Mr. Athorpe is found. There are many terms employed of which I am now ashamed—though no worse than what my antagonist deserved. I resolved, when I became an editor, never to commence a personal attack, but if I ever should be attacked, to repel it with all my might; and this I did in that case." Being asked whether he knew who his antagonist was, he replied, "He was an Irishman, who signed himself B., but whose proper name was BIBLE—a name, by the way, of which he was not worthy. He was only a sojourner in Sheffield, and the public knew very little of him. It was apparently to him a matter of astonishment that I had the audacity thus to speak of a magistrate: with this he commenced, and the controversy was kept up four weeks."

In a letter to Aston, by the hand of Miss Sarah Gales, dated August 13th, Montgomery says, "The truth is, I am at present in a very warm place at Sheffield, and am most furiously threatened with a new pro-

secution for my account of the late *horrid disturbance* here—a *riot* it was not: the account in the 'Iris' was true, but it was not half the truth: surely a day of terrible retribution will come! Our paper this week will explain more: pray favour me with a line now and then, and a *whisper* if you please."

At length the meditated blow was struck; a warrant for the apprehension of Montgomery was obtained, and which, strange as it may appear, was suffered to be a month old before it was executed, although he was at home all the time and walked out every day, though he knew an arrest was meditated. On the execution of this warrant, he was held to bail several weeks, before an indictment *could* be preferred against him at the Quarter Sessions.

On the 25th of September, Montgomery again adverts to this prosecution in a letter to Aston; adding, "Have you any consolation for me? Everybody here who dares to speak, exclaims against this malicious and villanous attack, not only upon me, but absolutely upon the liberties of the whole town of Sheffield. What the consequence will be, I presume not to anticipate—but believing, expecting the worst, I would not exchange all the sufferings and sorrow, to which an iniquitous sentence may doom me, for one hour's feelings of my miserable prosecutor. . . Farewell! may you never feel, except by sympathy, the sufferings, the distress, the agonies of your unfortunate, but most sincere friend."

When Montgomery appeared before the magistrates at the Cutlers' Hall, the Rev. James Wilkinson, vicar of Sheffield and one of the justices on the bench, asked him if he had anything to say against the charge specified in the warrant? He replied, "Before I answer that, or any other question, I must take the liberty to

ask whether Colonel Athorpe be determined to proceed to the extremities of the law; or whether he will meet me upon terms of explanation? if he can prove that I have injured him, I am willing to make any apology consistent with truth and my own character." Mr. Athorpe, who was present, answered, "No, Sir; I will prosecute you."

When he found that nothing but legal proceedings would satisfy the prosecutor, he requested Mr. Wilkinson to bind him over to appear at the County Assizes, instead of the Quarter Sessions. This request, however, was refused. Pursuant therefore to his recognisances, he appeared at Barnsley Sessions, Oct. 14., when a bill was found against him by the grand jury, for "a false, scandalous, and malicious libel on the character of R. A. Athorpe, Esq., a military magistrate," &c. The words indicted as libellous are those which we have printed in italics in the foregoing account of the disturbance at Sheffield; and the "nameless person" was construed to mean the commanding officer, and who instituted the prosecution on this ground. Pending the issue of the trial, much malicious ingenuity was exercised to prove and aggravate this fact, on the denial of which the defendant never intended to rest the merit of his defence.

Montgomery, in conformity with legal advice, had determined to remove this suit into the Court of King's Bench, by a writ of *certiorari*. Immediately the most malicious calumnies were industriously circulated by his enemies, concerning his conduct and expressions at the Cutlers' Hall. It was given out, and believed by many persons whose situations in life ought to have raised them above the meanness of either believing or being influenced by such a report, that "he had refused to be tried by a jury of his country-

men." This, and another report equally unfounded, that "he durst not suffer himself to be tried on the verdict of his neighbours, and in a place where he was known," influenced him to change his first determination. He therefore only traversed the indictment to Doncaster Sessions.

James Montgomery to Joseph Aston.

"Sheffield, Oct. 24. 1795.

"DEAR FRIEND,

"I purposely delayed writing to you till Barnsley Sessions were passed, at which, as was expected, a bill was preferred and found against me for that part only of my paragraph where I notice the behaviour of a nameless person, riding among the people, previous to the reading of the Riot Act. In the warrant to apprehend me, I was charged with having printed and published 'a gross misrepresentation of all that happened' on that fatal evening; and further, that my account was '*likely* to stir up commotions among the people and disturb the peace of the town.' This charge, as ridiculous as false, has been entirely dropped, and the whole has been cut down into a miserable charge of a libel on the character of our redoubtable *military magistrate*,—without one syllable about *sedition* in the whole indictment.

"It was both prudent and politic in my adversaries to drop *the most serious part* of this accusation; for a friend of mine had been arrested and bound over to Barnsley Sessions, for affirming in the public streets, and in the presence of the justices themselves, that the men shot were *murdered*—they did not think proper even *to prefer a bill against him!* Is there one word in my whole paragraph which conveys so severe a censure on the hero of that evening? No; but my friend is a vendor of stockings*, and I a vendor of newspapers: the prosecution is levelled against the 'Iris,'—they are determined to crush it. . . . .

* Luke Palfreyman. We have already intimated that he did not escape prosecution.

"My friends at Sheffield all insist upon my going to York [*i.e.*, removing the indictment by writ of *certiorari* thither for trial], and have promised to assist me as far as lies in their power. The whole expenses of my last trial amounted to ninety pounds. My friends made me a present of sixty pounds towards it, and I am thirty pounds out of pocket, besides all the vexation and misery I suffered.

"This shall not discourage me; since I am compelled to meet danger, I will face it like a man—an innocent man, whom a verdict of an ignorant jury may condemn, but cannot *make guilty* . . . .

"Be assured, that wherever I am, in bonds or at liberty, I shall remain unalterably your sincere and grateful friend,

"J. M. G.

"Mr. Joseph Aston, Manchester."

The publication, in the "Iris," of a complimentary sonnet addressed to Mr. Vaughan on the late trial, by Barbara Wreaks*, was the commencement of Montgomery's friendship with a pleasing local poetess, who often afterwards became his correspondent, and ultimately pursued the precarious profession of authorship. Along with the Misses Gales he also visited William Newton of Cressbrook, near Tideswell, who, as well before as after this year, sent communications in rhyme to the newspaper; and the writer of this paragraph recollects once making a sort of pilgrimage to see the "Minstrel of the Peak," as he is called by Anna Seward in an original letter now before us. He was then an old man, very active, with a head of long white hair streaming in the mountain breeze, like that of a bard in Ossian. He died, Nov. 3. 1830, in his eightieth year.†

* Afterwards Mrs. Hofland.

† In the house of his son, Mr. William Newton, at Lytton, near Cressbrook, there is a capital likeness of the "Minstrel of the Peak," accompanied by those of his wife and *her* sister—"Aunt Nancy," as she was fondly called, for her kind offices to every one

Amidst Montgomery's anxieties arising from political strife, he did not entirely forget his devotion to the Muses; but the evidence of this fact consists only in the production of some short and fugitive pieces. Though often far differently employed at present, the scenes and circumstances of his boyhood, when in simplicity and purity he trilled his earliest lay in imitation of "Spiritual Songs," sometimes came freshly to his mind with their Scripture terms and imagery. The following are three of the middle verses of a "Hymn, on occasion of laying the foundation-stone of a corn mill near Sheffield, to be erected for the purpose of supplying the members of forty sick clubs with flour and meal at reasonable prices, Nov. 5. 1795."

"Will He who hears the raven cry
Reject our prayers, and bid us die?
Will He refuse his help to yield,
Who clothes the lilies of the field?

"Pale Famine lifts, at his command,
Her withering arm, and blasts the land;
Death stalks behind, her lingering slave,
And sinks in every step a grave.

"But when He smiles, the desert blooms;
New life is born among the tombs;
O'er the glad plains abundance teems,
And plenty rolls in bounteous streams."

We shall not weaken, by any remarks of our own, the effect of the following reflections, with which the

requiring womanly sympathy in the neighbourhood of Tideswell. (*Vide* Rhodes's "Peak Scenery," and Holland's "Memorials of Chantrey.")

editor of the "Iris" took his leave of this eventful year:—

"At the period of one year, and the commencement of another, we naturally pause, look round, and contemplate our situation. While memory calls up the shadows of past events, fancy, with equal solicitude, presents the airy visions of futurity. If between the recollection of scenes behind, and the fond anticipation of prospects before us, we frequently lose the relish for present enjoyments, by the same delusion we may occasionally deceive our sorrows, smile by stealth, and dream of hope in the lap of despair. On this last day of the most trying year of my life, the readers of the 'Iris' will pardon the egotism of a few remarks which my own situation and the present melancholy condition of our common country seem to justify.

"It is an indispensable duty, incumbent on every man, to promote, to the extent of his abilities, the welfare of that community of which he consents to become a member. Impressed with a solemn sense of this sacred obligation, I ventured, though with trembling reluctance, in times the most inauspicious, under circumstances the most discouraging, to step into the post of danger, which my abler predecessor had been compelled to relinquish. The 'Iris' was planted among the thorns which had choked the 'Register.' No young man ever embarked in life with fewer hopes or greater fears; it was my misfortune to inherit all the difficulties which had encompassed my predecessor, with a very humble portion of his talents, his fortitude, or his experience. His enemies felt no reluctance in transferring that resentment which he had escaped to his successor; but it was very uncertain whether my conduct would secure to me the countenance of his friends. Deeply conscious of these disadvantages, sensible of my own weakness, and but too well aware with what a tide of passion and prejudice I had to contend, I ventured nevertheless, like NOAH'S DOVE, to quit the ark of private security, and wander over the ocean of public strife, hoping the storms of faction might sometime

cease, and the waters of discord subside. Hitherto I have endeavoured, to the full extent of my limited abilities, and to the best of my knowledge, faithfully to discharge my duty to my country, to my conscience, and to my God. If the 'Iris' has met with the most distinguished patronage from a liberal public, I am ready to acknowledge that their indulgence has overlooked many imperfections, and rewarded its editor rather for the sincerity of his intentions than for the merit of his performances. On the other hand, I am proud to state that I owe nothing to the tender mercies of my enemies.

"If I have occasionally been deceived into errors, I have never designedly misled the public. If the enthusiasm of a warm and zealous heart has sometimes betrayed me into violence of expression, I have never wilfully concealed or exaggerated truth. I may have transgressed the doubtful bounds of prudence, but I have never broke through the barriers of justice. I have reprobated abuses in Church and State, and while abuses exist, I trust I shall never want courage to censure them; but the sanctity of religion has never been violated, the principles of the constitution have never been vilified in the 'Iris.' If there exist one human being so free from prejudice, so pure from blemish, that he never judges wrong nor acts amiss, let him punish me for every fault which the weakness of my head, or the folly of my heart, may have led me into; but while infirmities rather than excellencies are the characteristics of humanity, I may claim that indulgence towards my errors which ought to be equally extended to all mankind; for the best as well as the worst are always in need of it. If God were as unforgiving as man, the world would be a den of despair."

We have given the foregoing extract less as a specimen of the writer's style than as exhibiting his views and feelings at this trying crisis: nor are his literary claims difficult to appreciate. The columns of the "Iris" were at this time almost the only channel through which the current of his imagination meandered.

It had not yet overflowed its banks, nor spread itself into those innumerable streams of beauty, fertility, and variety, which afterwards diversified so richly the literature of the age; and in the pursuit and delineation of which the biographers of Montgomery have before them a difficult, but delightful, labour.

CHAP. XIX.

1796.

SEDITION AND TREASON BILLS. — LETTER TO ASTON. — SECOND TRIAL AT DONCASTER. — SENTENCED TO FINE, AND IMPRISONMENT IN YORK CASTLE. — MONTGOMERY'S ADDRESS TO THE PUBLIC. — LETTERS TO ASTON AND J. P. SMITH. — COLERIDGE VISITS SHEFFIELD. — RELEASE FROM PRISON. — LETTERS.

THE preceding year had closed with the passing, and the present one opened with the operation, of "an act for the safety and preservation of his Majesty's person and government against treasonable and seditious practices and attempts," which excited vehement altercation among politicians. Of course, while this bill and one "for preventing seditious meetings" were in progress, the Editor of the "Iris" spoke of them with disapprobation, printing the first-named with a deep *mourning border* — more safe, perhaps more significant, than words, with a man awaiting his trial for libel. It seems, however, that while some of his readers charged him with "unbecoming heat and violence," others complained of his "lukewarmness." To both he replies: —"As friends of freedom and the constitution of our country, we do not hesitate for a moment to declare that, after weighing in our minds the arguments on both sides of this great political question, we feel, as yet, unconvinced of the absolute necessity of such measures; but, on the other hand, as friends to the peace and happiness of society, we must always recom-

mend a respectful submission to the laws of which these bills are now become a part."

James Montgomery to Joseph Aston.

"Sheffield, Jan. 2. 1795[6].

"My dear Friend,

"I write to you at this moment under the impression of very melancholy feelings. After having obtained the advice of Mr. Vaughan respecting my prosecution, and after weighing all the advantages of removing the cause to York against the enormous expense and even uncertain chance of getting justice there, I feel myself inclined to hazard the trial at *Doncaster*—the very name of which makes the blood run cold to my heart. In the course of three weeks I must return to my dismal den in the Castle of York—the sessions being on the 20th instant .... Nothing in this case hurts—nay absolutely stabs—the peace of my mind so much, as that I shall not be permitted to prove the facts stated in the 'Iris.' It is impossible to foresee what sort of charges they may bring against me, since my hands are tied up from repelling them by evidence; and if I be cast without proving the facts, I dare not afterwards state them to the public. Thus heaven only knows how completely guilty I shall appear in the eyes of all the kingdom, except the inhabitants of Sheffield, who, I am sure, to a man, in their own minds, acquit me, though too many of them will not dare to do otherwise than condemn me in public. You may judge of my broken and desponding spirits by the melancholy address I have published this week in the 'Iris.' I have not a heart of steel: I was made of more frail materials—I shall soon crumble to dust.

"The expenses of a trial at Doncaster will be nearly the same as at York, as I must retain special counsel. I think of Mr. Vaughan, to whom I gave a fee of thirty guineas last January; but if I be convicted [at Doncaster sessions], I shall not have to pay the costs of the prosecutor, which I should have to do were I to remove the trial by certiorari to York [assizes]. My friends have determined to lend me

some assistance; and since you had the kindness to propose to use your interest with a few friends in Manchester on my behalf, it would be false delicacy and unworthy shame, if I declined it. .... May I be permitted to write to you from York? The 'Whisperer' is dead; when I have leisure I mean to raise him again to life. The world, I perceive, is as mad at Manchester as ever.

"I am, dear Sir, with sincere respect,

"Yours, much obliged,

"J. M. G.

"Mr. Joseph Aston, Manchester."

The trial of "James Montgomery for a libel against R. A. Athorpe, Esq.," came on at Doncaster Sessions, Jan. 21. 1796. Uninteresting as the account of this trial may possibly prove, we shall give so much of the evidence as may be consistent with perspicuity and brevity.

The Justices were M. A. Taylor, Esq., Chairman, the Right Hon. Lord Hawke, Bacon Frank, Esq., the Rev. James Wilkinson, and the Rev. James Stovin. Counsel for the prosecution, Mr. Heywood, Mr. France; for the defendant, Mr. Vaughan, Mr. Markham.

Mr. France having stated the heads of the indictment, Mr. Heywood addressed the jury on behalf of the prosecution. He observed, that this was a private, not a public case; it involved in it no political speculations. The rights of man and the liberty of the press were foreign to the present question. The defendant, he was sure, had no cause to complain of the want of the privilege to libel administration; for the "Iris" had long been the vehicle of abuse upon the Government of this country. Therefore, laying aside all political considerations, it was the duty of the jury to weigh well the nature and tendency of the libel before them, every syllable of which he declared to be a base

calumny, a false, a scandalous, and a malicious lie, forged for the express purpose of injuring and disgracing in the eyes of the public the respectable person against whom it was levelled. Wherever Mr. Athorpe was known, it would not be believed; but as the "Iris" was circulated in various parts of the kingdom where Mr. Athorpe was not known, it was necessary to confute the falsehood and punish the libeller. Mr. Heywood entered here into a detail of the circumstances, which he stated nearly in the same manner as the prosecutor and his evidence afterwards gave them, except that no proof was produced of the publication or even the circulation of a *seditious handbill,* which Mr. Heywood asserted had been distributed with great industry on the day when the riot happened, and calculated to inflame and incense the mind of the people.*

He then compared his own narrative with the account published in the "Iris," and declared that if the latter were true, the unfortunate persons who were killed on that occasion were murdered. As for the persons pretended to have been wounded by Mr. Athorpe (for he would prove him to be the "nameless person"), nobody was hurt or injured in any degree, except the men who were killed, and the Volunteers who were bruised by

* Much stress was laid upon this handbill, both before and during the trial. Montgomery afterwards observes: "I have more than once questioned the legitimacy of this strange abortion of a distempered brain; and I confess I was exceedingly disappointed, when, after what Mr. Heywood had observed to my jury, no register of the birth, no evidence even of the existence of this child of chance was attempted to be produced. This I thought the more extraordinary, because a copy of this pretended bill, displayed with all the elegant ingenuity of typographical taste, appeared in several London papers, in an account of the disturbance avowedly published by authority in answer to the 'Iris,' and said to have been taken from the *oaths of witnesses* before the coroner's inquest. A comment is unnecessary. The text is clear."

stones thrown at them by the mob. The observation in the "Iris," respecting the wives and children of the deceased, was as false as the rest of the libel: for the one had no wife, and if the other had, it was unknown.*

Mr. Heywood then called his witnesses, the principal of whom was Mr. Athorpe himself†, who, being sworn, said that he was a magistrate of the West Riding of Yorkshire, and also an officer (lieutenant-colonel) of the Sheffield Volunteers. On the 4th of August last he dined with Earl Fitzwilliam at Wentworth House. At dinner he was called out, and Captain Leader delivered a request from the officers of the Volunteers to go and protect the peace of the town of Sheffield. On his arrival, he dressed himself in his regimentals, and rode up Norfolk Street, which he found to be full of people, as any body would conceive in a riot. He entered the Parade by the narrow door, the great gate being closed; as he rode in, he heard some person hooting and hissing, and calling him by abusive names, upon which he

* The wife of one of the men killed on this occasion was begging at Sheffield for the support of herself and six small children, at the time when the above assertion was made!

† Montgomery was not only surprised, but alarmed, to see Athorpe thus brought forward as a witness in his own cause, and to hear him swear that he did not cut any person with his sword; and this at the time a woman was allowed to exhibit in court the scar of a wound on her arm, which she swore was given by the sword of the plaintiff! The defendant, who was permitted to sit by and converse with his counsel during the trial, immediately turned to Mr. Vaughan, and whispered with apprehension, "Why, they will, in the next place, indict my witnesses for perjury!" "You need not fear that," was the reply, "they have enough on their hands already." As to the reality and source of the wound on the woman's arm, there was, in fact, no doubt: on the other hand, it is possible, from the peculiar agitation of the colonel at the time (as testified by almost every person present), that he might be unconscious of the occurrence himself.

exclaimed, "For God's sake, gentlemen, what are you all about?" Hereupon, a young man in a red jacket started up, and, pointing towards Colonel Cameron, exclaimed, "Seize him, kill him!" or something to that purport. Mr. Athorpe ordered the man to be apprehended; he was seized, but broke loose. Mr. Athorpe then drew his sword and brandished it about, in defence of his horse's head and bridle, as he pursued the man, who at length fell down over another man, and he could have killed him if he would. Mr. Athorpe stopped his horse, lest he should trample upon him. He walked with his horse to the gateway; could get no further; and said, "Send for the Volunteers." Somebody said, "Colonel, take care of yourself." He then saw a company of the Volunteers drawn up by the gate. The concourse of people followed him into the street. Upon this, he thought it necessary to read the proclamation in the Riot Act, which he always had carried written on a card in his pocket, since the riots in Sheffield a few years ago, to be ready upon all occasions. As he had changed his clothes for his uniform when he entered the town, he forgot to take it out of his pocket; he was therefore obliged to send for it. Having read the proclamation, he remonstrated with the people, particularly those who seemed to have come only from curiosity, and told them of the penalties they would incur if they remained longer together. An hour and ten minutes expired, when some stones were thrown, by which two Volunteers were bruised very much. The Volunteers were ordered to fire, and two persons were killed; but he had never heard that any body else was wounded, though he had sent round to inquire of all the surgeons in the town. He believed that "nameless person" in the paragraph alluded to himself. He said, as his counsel closed his

examination, "I never touched any one person with my sword, directly or indirectly, upon my oath."

Two other witnesses having been examined, the evidence for the prosecution closed; when

Mr. Vaughan rose on the part of the defendant, and addressed the court and the jury in a speech of considerable length, which was delivered with the most impressive energy, and heard, notwithstanding frequent interruptions from the gentlemen on the bench, with the most profound attention. "This speech," observes one who heard it delivered, "for strength of reasoning, ingenuity of thought, and elegance of diction, has seldom been paralleled in any court of justice." A sketch of this speech is before us, and justifies, to some extent, this eulogium.

Witnesses were now called and examined by the defendant's counsel, two of whom swore that they had received wounds from the prosecutor's sword; one of these showed the scar of a wound upon her arm in court; the other witnesses deposed to the manner in which the colonel brandished his sword amongst the crowd.

Mr. Heywood having shortly replied to Mr. Vaughan, M. A. Taylor, Esq., the chairman, summed up, and delivered a charge to the jury, at the conclusion of which he read the whole paragraph containing the libel, and commented on each part, observing that the whole consequences were laid upon the nameless person. He told the jury they were not to decide on the character of Mr. Athorpe, but upon the intention of the defendant, towards whom, if they had a doubt upon their minds, they ought to lean.

The jury, after retiring about a quarter of an hour, brought in a verdict of "Guilty."

Mr. Vaughan, in an eloquent speech, moved for an arrest of judgment; but this motion was overruled by

the court, and the following *sentence* was pronounced: — That James Montgomery be imprisoned for the term of six months in the Castle of York; that he pay a fine of thirty pounds to the king; and that he give security for his good behaviour for two years, himself in a bond of two hundred pounds, and two sureties in fifty pounds each.

He was immediately taken into custody, and conveyed to York; and again immured in the solitude of a prison, with a mind lacerated by the consciousness of its injuries, and a body feeble and debilitated. A little incident connected with this event may be here mentioned. The gaoler in whose charge Montgomery was placed accompanied him to York with the least possible demonstration of officiality by the way; and on reaching the city, where he was known, he parted from his prisoner, half-a-street's length, telling him to go first, knock at the castle gate, and get admitted before he (the gaoler) came up! This second confinement was rendered not only supportable, but comfortable, so far as that word can have any signification as applied to the economy of a prison; air, exercise, cleanliness, and attention, in the utmost degree of their consistency with actual incarceration, he was permitted to enjoy. The magistrates, previous to quitting the bench at Doncaster, in consideration of the precarious state of his health, were pleased to order that every facility should be afforded for the introduction of whatever might restore his health or alleviate the necessary evils of his confinement; and, but for this indulgence, there is reason to believe that the sentence of imprisonment would have proved to the sufferer a sentence of death.

January 30th, Montgomery addressed the public on the subject of this prosecution, as he had done on the preceding one during the corresponding month of the

previous year, from "the Castle of York." As he must have been the best judge of his own intentions and feelings, we shall make no remarks, but allow him to speak for himself in an extract rather long, but the length of which we think the facts and reflections and its own importance will justify.

"'STRIKE — BUT HEAR ME!'

"In appearing before the public, after having been a second time pronounced guilty of a misdemeanor by the verdict of an English jury, I feel all the difficulties of my situation rushing upon me. If I speak with boldness, I shall be censured for presumption; diffidence may be construed into a symptom, but silence would be considered a proof, of guilt. The first ferment of spirit which naturally follows any sudden shock of misfortune being now hushed into a calm resignation, I will endeavour, and with a degree of confidence which a strong sense of the duty I owe to my conscience and to my character alone could inspire, to express my sentiments on the subject of my late trial with the same coolness and candour as I desire to be heard . . .

"On the trial, it was laid down as the law of the land, that the truth or falsehood of a libel were equally immaterial, except as they went to prove the intention of the publisher to be innocent or criminal. Both the counsel for the prosecution and the chairman on the bench, in their addresses to the jury, declared that, if the facts stated in my account had been true to the extent, the prosecutor ought to have stood at the bar in my room. If I make it appear that, from what seemed to be the strongest and most pointed evidence,—the evidence of facts,—I had every reason to believe the account I gave to be literally true, is it any proof of criminal intention that I published, in a paper, which necessarily comprehended the news of the day, a detail of certain circumstances which were apparently illegal? On the melancholy 4th of August, and even till within a few days of my trial, the witnesses (one excepted) who came forward to identify what they had seen and what

they had suffered, were equally strangers to each other and strangers to me. The facts had been previously attested to me by many creditable and intelligent persons, who, from the mouths of one or other of these witnesses, had learned the account of the wounds they received, and the blood which had stained their clothes; and the general circumstances were confirmed to me upon the most positive and unequivocal testimony of various spectators of the transactions on the Parade, and in Norfolk Street. If I had not been fully convinced of the truth of my account, my enemies themselves will not believe that I would have dared to publish it. *Malice* is too subtle and suspicious to hazard much; but a warm, imprudent zeal for truth seldom discovers dangers till it becomes entangled in a snare. Would it ever have entered into the conception of any man, unpractised in deceit, unhabituated to treachery, to believe, that four persons, of fair characters, and strangers to each other, in the same hour, on the same spot of ground, without any previous concert or knowledge of each other's intentions, should each forge a distinct, deliberate, and consistent falsehood, and without any hope of reward, except the amusement of cheating, wilfully and wickedly impose upon their relatives, their friends, and the public; nay, even exhibit their wounds, and show the blood sprinkled upon their clothes, as evidence of the facts? Had such a monstrous supposition been suggested to me before my late trial, I should not have hesitated to pronounce it a libel upon human nature, as impossible as it was absurd. But when I consider the solemn and repeated asseverations of the prosecutor; when I weigh the credit due to his character as a magistrate, his honour as an officer, and his fortune as a gentleman, I declare with a sincerity which I hope will never be suspected, that what I have hitherto considered as a moral impossibility, I shall in future regard as a paradox. But admitting these poor persons were no willing impostors, but only mistaken concerning what they believed they had seen and felt, might not a fanciful imagination amuse itself with the idea that deception may sometimes approach so

near to reality that a person may be bruised without being touched, and bleed without being wounded? These remarks may be censured as impertinent; but they rise from the subject, and, I presume, every reader of the trial has anticipated them in his own mind. The hundreds of Sheffield who were spectators of the scenes described in the 'Iris' of the 7th of August, must judge how far I was myself imposed upon, and how far I wilfully misrepresented what happened. If I had published the monstrous reports of the moment, I should indeed have been guilty of the most cruel injustice towards my prosecutor, and richly have merited the punishment which I am now suffering; but when I recollect the number and plausibility of those dreadful rumours, I am astonished at having steered so clear of them. It would have been a proof of more than human sagacity to have published, under such disadvantages, and in a moment of universal consternation, an account perfectly free from error. To such correctness I make no pretensions: all I maintain amounts only to this, that I solemnly believed my general statement to be true; and, till I understood the reverse from the prosecutor himself upon my trial, I never had any reason to believe it otherwise. Whether, upon the strength of his sole testimony, I ought now publicly to recant and declare the whole account false, I humbly leave to the good sense of an unprejudiced public to determine for me."

Of the nature of his employment during this second incarceration, we have various evidence; of which not the least interesting is that comprised in his correspondence with friends. Of these, the first place is due to Mr. J. Pye Smith, before named, who generously and judiciously undertook the management of the newspaper and the printing-office, on behalf of his friend.

"Jan. 23. My dear Friend—You have now stepped into my place, and you will not long be there before the anxieties and vexations attendant on the discharge of my painful public duty will begin to harass you."—J. M. to J. P. S.

"Jan. 30. I am exceedingly glad to find you take so tender and active a concern in my welfare at home. Give my best respects to all the men, and tell them I rely much on their diligence and friendship."—J. M. to J. P. S.

"Feb. 13. I have little room to spare to make any further observations respecting the 'Iris:' be firm, cool, and moderate; you never can sink into dulness, if I estimate your talents aright. But beware of being hurried away by generous indignation, *imprudent zeal for truth*, or the dread of censure from *any party*."*—*Ibid.*

Still more interesting are the letters to his Manchester correspondent.

James Montgomery to Joseph Aston.

"Castle of York, Feb. 3. 1796.

"My dear Friend,

"Ere now you have read my trial, and know my fate. Will you (though our personal knowledge of each other is small) believe me capable of publishing a wilful and malicious falsehood, which, immediately on its appearance, would subject me to all the vengeance of the law; and then, to support it and screen myself from justice, can you believe that I could corrupt and suborn persons of fair and honest character to come forward as perjured witnesses in my behalf? Unless you imagine this, I know, I *feel* your opinion: if I be really guilty, my defence must make me the blackest, the most execrable monster that ever dared to insult the laws of Nature and of God. . . . I have placed the Newspaper during my absence in the hands of an ingenious young friend of mine, on whose talents and zeal to serve me I rely much.

My present situation here may be described in few words: the times are so flourishing now, as compared with this time last year, that, instead of about sixty debtors confined in the

These extracts, as well as what follows to the same address, are from the very interesting Memoir of the Rev. John Pye Smith, D.D., published in 1853.

Castle, the place overflows with double that number; and other prisoners are in proportion. I cannot, on any terms, procure a room for myself; but I have the certain reversion of the first that becomes vacant. I am therefore under the mortifying necessity of taking up my quarters among persons of far different appearance from those with whom I have been accustomed to associate; but I must give the poor men their due,— companions in misfortune, they really pay me the greatest respect, and show me every attention, and do for me every service in their power. You will think my lot a hard one; but is there no consolation at hand? Are not these gloomy walls an *asylum* from the fury of persecutions? At home, and when I am at liberty, it is evident I am never *safe:* here I am *well secured!* why then complain? My dear friend, the worst is over. The torture of the trial, the journey hither, the horror on entering this den of despair, but, above all, the lingering agony of suspense which has preyed upon my heart, and drained my spirits dry, is past. The succeeding six months of my dreary confinement here cannot be more melancholy than the past six: to *know* the worst is far less terrible than to *dread* the worst. My paper warns me to drop my pen: pray write with your usual freedom — my letters are not *inspected.*

"Your sincere friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"Joseph Aston, Manchester."

The following letter is curious from the allusions which it contains to the early feelings, fancies, and efforts of the writer: from it, as a primary source, have been derived most of the notices of the boyhood of the poet which have been printed in memoirs of him.

James Montgomery to Joseph Aston.

"Castle of York, Feb. 18. 1798.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"To be consoled with the sympathy and honoured with the friendship of the virtuous, the liberal, and the

good, is more than an equivalent reward for any inconvenience that I may suffer from the hatred and oppression of the base and the wicked. Why should I complain? I meet with so many generous hearts to *share* my sorrows, that they leave me none to mourn over; but yet, of such unhappy materials have I been formed, so close do my infirmities cling to me, and so ingenious am I in the art of tormenting myself, that I am seldom, very seldom, cheerful. You have called me your friend; and you permit me to address you by the same endearing name—you are entitled to my confidence; and if I withheld it, I should be unworthy of your regard. I must therefore freely confess, that I believe almost any [other] person breathing, would, in my present circumstances, be perfectly happy. I trust that no man can be more *resigned* than I feel myself to suffering; but yet there is a native melancholy interwoven in my disposition. I have from my earliest years encouraged its growth, because in certain moments I loved to feast on the delicious poison.

"I will not presume to suppose I was born a poet; but I was most certainly born a dissatisfied being, whom nothing but poetic feelings and poetic fame could gratify. At school, almost as early as I can remember, I wooed the Muses; before I was ten years old, I had written a little volume of rhymes; at the age of twelve, I had filled two large ones with the abortions of my brain; and at fourteen, I had composed an heroi-comic poem, in three books, containing above a thousand lines in imitation of Homer's [battle of the] 'Frogs and Mice.' Unfortunately for my peace of mind, I was encouraged by partial and flattering friends to proceed in my career—I ought to have had a strait waistcoat and straw, instead of the encomiums which were lavished upon me. Fired with an enthusiasm which nothing but the fond hopes of an immortal fame could have inspired in the bosom of a giddy school-boy, and flushed almost to madness with the success of my first flights, I determined to rival—nay, outshine—every bard of ancient or modern times! I have shed many a tear in reading some of the sublimest passages in some of our own poets, to think that I could not equal them.

I planned and began at least a dozen epic poems, each to [consist of] as many books: I cannot help smiling many a time, when I am rummaging over the warehouse of my brain, to find among the lumber these unfortunate embryos.

"After a long and difficult choice, I at length pitched upon the subject of the wars in the reign of Alfred the Great. Now, my dear friend, forget for one moment that you are a critic; and I will in a few words show you how mad and ungovernable an imagination I possessed at that time. I was just fifteen years old when I began it; and I determined to strike out of the common beaten track of Homer and other heroic poets; nothing would satisfy my boundless ambition but the discovery of a new and original path, where none had ever gone before, and where it would be hopeless indeed for any but a poet of the most astonishing power to follow me! Do not laugh,—I planned my poem to be comprised in a certain number of books; but each book was to consist of *Pindaric Odes*, in which the story was to be told in the most liberal manner; in a word, my idea was to unite in one work all the magnificence and sublimity of the epic with the boldness and enthusiasm of the ode. Wild as the fancy was, I began and completed *two* books, containing about twenty Pindaric Odes! The manuscripts are by me: I could almost weep over them, as over dead children, at this moment! On this plan the story would not languish; but, on the contrary, would proceed with great rapidity. I cannot in a letter give you a specimen of the execution, nor even distinctly unravel the plan; but, that you may form some faint idea of the extent of my frenzy, I will tell you the subjects of my first and second odes. The poem commences with Alfred in the Isle of Athelney, disguised as a peasant. I was resolved to attempt a daring flight at first going off; and accordingly the work opens with a description of the Almighty seated upon his throne, looking down and commiserating the ruin of England, when lo! a host of the spirits of those who had just perished in a bloody battle with the Danes, appears in his presence, to receive their everlasting doom. These un-

fortunate spirits describe the miserable condition of their country, and implore the Sovereign of the world to interfere and deliver it from *despotism* (thus you see I was a friend of freedom long before I was a politician). Of the rest of the plot I will say nothing: this bombastic flight will satisfy you. The subject has drawn me in like a whirlpool: and I am ashamed to observe that my paper is almost gone, and my letter scarcely begun. When once I begin to ride my hobby, I am never wearied; and I forget that my friends are not so fond of the motion as I am. This very circumstance —this poetic frenzy—has been the source of many sorrows and many misfortunes to me: my life, short as it has been, has been chequered with many curious changes, and has taken its colour from this unhappy passion for fame. Disappointments and distresses, of which few—indeed none but those who have experienced the same—can form any idea, have been the consequence. My disposition, by too much indulgence of that romantic melancholy which I mistook for inspiration, is become gloomy and discontented; my feelings are very irritable; and I have an unhappy sensibility that would much better suit a boarding-school miss, who lives upon novels, than one whose evil stars have placed him in a public and perilous situation, which talents, equal even to those which he once formerly fancied he possessed, would be requisite to support, though the reward at least is trivial. I have now given you the key to all my follies and infirmities: perhaps, in the course of our correspondence, if you think such things worth postage, I may occasionally give you some farther particulars of my eccentric life. . . . I have written a little piece entitled the 'Captive Nightingale,' faintly expressive of my feelings, when I am in an ill humour in this place; but you'll remember I never was blest with an amiable wife and little family—*that part* of the tale is only fiction. . . .

"Farewell,

"J. M. G.

"Mr. Joseph Aston, Manchester."

In the beginning of this year, Coleridge visited Sheffield, and preached in the Unitarian Chapel.* While walking to the Manor, he composed the "Lines on observing a Blossom, on the 1st of Feb. 1796," and commencing —

> "Sweet flower! that, peeping from thy russet stem,
> Unfoldest timidly," &c.

They were printed in the "Iris" of May 20th; and according to a note in Montgomery's hand, in the file copy of the paper, "*originally appeared* there."

James Montgomery to Joseph Aston.

"Castle of York, March 24. 1796.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

. . . . "The day after the date of my last letter to you, I had the good fortune to be removed to a snug and very comfortable apartment in the new building here, where I have remained, and shall stay during the rest of my confinement. I have one room to myself, with the free use of the extensive yard, and every other indulgence the condition of a prisoner will admit. I am removed from the noise of riot and revelry which is carried to the most extravagant excess in the Old Castle, as in all other

* A letter from Coleridge, dated "Sheffield, Jan. 1796," is printed in the "Biographia Literaria," vol. ii. p. 352., edit. 1847. In it the writer mentions that he had preached a charity sermon at Nottingham, and enters into an elaborate apology for having been persuaded "against his better judgment" to appear in "the gown" in the pulpit at Birmingham during the delivery of a political sermon. On reaching Manchester, he writes, "I arrived here last night from Sheffield, to which place I shall forward only about thirty numbers [of the "Watchman"]. I might have succeeded there, at least, equally well with the former towns, but I should injure the sale of the 'Iris,' the editor of which (a very amiable and ingenious young man of the name of James Montgomery) is now in prison for a libel on a bloody-minded magistrate there. Of course, I declined publicly advertising or disposing of the 'Watchman' in that town."

prisons where a multitude of persons of all descriptions are promiscuously mingled. In this building there are four well-behaved persons, who have lived in the most respectable circles, and seen better days; and also eight of the people called Quakers, who are confined for refusing to pay tithes, though they never did nor ever would have resisted the seizure of their property to any amount the rapacious priest required. There are three venerable greyheaded men among them, and the others are very decent and sensible. One of the old Quakers is my principal and my best companion; a very gay, shrewd, cheerful man, with a heart as honest and as *tender* as his face is clear and smiling. My time, on the whole, passes away in a smooth and easy manner. I employ myself in reading, writing, walking, &c., and never, on the whole, enjoyed better spirits in my life. My friends at Sheffield are become almost enthusiastic in my favour; their number is greatly increased: my enemies are silent, and many of the most bitter have relented: I do not believe there are ten persons who will venture to say I have not been most cruelly and unjustly abused. My business, which I confess was and is my greatest cause of concern and anxiety, on account of its intricacy, and the care required in its management, has hitherto gone on with almost unprecedented smoothness and success. My health, as I think I informed you before, has been very indifferent . . . what I am yet doomed to suffer from it, God only knows! . . . Adieu! J. M. G.

"Mr. Joseph Aston, Manchester."

"April 2.

"Your letter received this morning contains no bad news, but yet it has given me inexpressible concern. It hurts me exceedingly to find, though your friendship and modesty combine to conceal it as much as possible from me, that you are very much harassed, and find great difficulty, care, and anxiety attending the discharge of that trust, which I was happy, for my own sake, but uneasy from the beginning for yours, to repose in you."—J. M. to J. P. S.

On the 5th of April, and again on the 12th of May, Montgomery addressed long letters to Mr. Aston from the "Castle of York:" the former contains information relative to the writer's school days, and has been used elsewhere; the latter is mostly filled with expressions of friendship, and closes as follows:—

"I have attempted something of the kind you proposed to me. Of its merits, philosophical as well as poetical, you, who are a Pythagorean, can judge much better than the generality of readers. The subject was certainly highly capable of embellishment; and if I could have produced a poem equal to the model conceived in my own mind, it would have been far superior to that which has appeared [in the 'Iris']. . . . The time of my imprisonment now begins to dwindle fast away: I have little more than seven weeks to reside here. I am, on the whole, cheerful and happy; though such little — I mean such great — disappointments as not regularly receiving letters from the few friends that I have of your liberal sentiments and elegant feeling, puts me out of temper."

James Montgomery to Mr. J. P. Smith.

"York Castle, May 1. 1796.

"My dear Friend,

"My captivity now begins to decline down the hill, and I shall only have nine weeks to stay here on Tuesday next; but I fear I shall not return immediately to Sheffield: the doctors here say it will be absolutely necessary for me to go then to Scarborough for the benefit of sea-bathing and drinking at least a fortnight. Of this I apprise you thus early, that if I should be obliged to go there, you may be prepared to indulge me with your kind and valuable services a few weeks longer than we expected. . . . The management and arrangement of the 'Iris' has continued to afford me much satisfaction. I shall tremble when I resume it with my own hands, lest its credit should fall with the resignation of its

present editor. But tell that editor from me not to hack and hew Pitt quite so much in the London news; and to be particularly careful in the Sheffield news not to insert any *home occurrence* without the most indubitable authority." . . .

James Montgomery to Joseph Aston.

"Castle of York, June 9. 1796.

"My dear Friend,

"You have threatened to criticise the 'Bramin.' I will be revenged on you, before you even commit the crime. I have read your novel with attention and much more pleasure than I promised myself from the form you had adopted. I hate the plan of writing novels in letters; but I acknowledge your scheme required it. . . . I will reveal a secret to you which I have hitherto withheld. Four years ago, when I was only nineteen, when I was so vain of my abilities that I thought nothing too big for my grasp, I wrote something, which I baptized a Novel. This was perhaps the most whimsical farrago of absurdities that was ever begotten between a pen and an inkstand. However, last time I was in this den, I took the pains to revise and rewrite it almost entirely anew. I then ventured to show it to a friend of mine in Sheffield, who is a very severe critic, and hates almost the whole generation of novels. He read it, and coolly told me that hitherto he had wished me a triumph over Athorpe in my expected trial; 'but now,' said he, 'I wish you may be imprisoned at least six months, that you may be compelled to write your novel over again, and then it will be worth reading.' I have taken his hint, and during my present residence here, have nearly written over again and new-modelled this strange production. . . . Should it appear in print, you will have a fair opportunity of retaliating on me the faults I have found with your ingenious work. My time of confinement [draws towards a close], but my sentence is a Cerberus with three heads,—fine, imprisonment, and bail! Thus, even when I leave this dreadful place, after six months' confinement and paying thirty pounds, I am still to be indebted to two friends for the miserable privilege of

being a prisoner at large two years longer! I cannot think with patience on the subject; but I must submit; and it is as well to do so with a good grace as with a bad one. I hope to be released on the 5th of July; and in a fortnight afterwards shall probably be once more in Sheffield. I wonder what evil star led me thither at first! I propose to spend a fortnight at Scarbro'. Farewell; and may you enjoy health, peace, and every temporal prosperity in the bosom of your family and among your friends, without ever being torn from them as I have been!

"I am, most sincerely, your faithful friend,

"J. M. G.

"Mr. Joseph Aston, Manchester."

In the "Iris" of June 17th and 24th appeared rhyming "Epistles to a Friend," entitled the "Pleasures of Imprisonment," and dated from York Castle. In "simple verse" they afford us a glimpse of the poet and his companions within the walls, and show that, however his person might be in durance, his thoughts were as unfettered as his conscience was clear: so that he could exclaim —

"Blest with freedom unconfined,
Dungeons cannot hold the soul:
Who can chain the immortal mind? —
None but He who spans the pole!"

These lines strongly remind us of the sentiment in a well-known verse of Lovelace, written while he was a prisoner in the loathsome gatehouse at Westminster:—

"Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage;
Minds innocent and quiet take
That for a hermitage."

Others in like circumstances have expressed themselves to the same effect; and a volume of the *Poetry of Im-*

prisonment by British authors might be collected between the time of the Poet-king, James the First of Scotland, or Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, and that of Thomas Cooper the Chartist. It is true that Montgomery, like the "unhappy buck" in the Castle-yard,

> "Had been *twice* hunted — *twice* run down!"—
> "And knew, by past experience taught,
> That Innocence availeth nought."

But he adds —

> "I know,— and 't is my proudest boast,
> That conscience is itself an host;
> While this inspires my swelling breast,
> Let all forsake me — I'm at rest!
> Ten thousand deaths in every nerve
> I'd rather *suffer* than *deserve!*'

James Montgomery to Mr. J. P. Smith.

"York Castle, July 4. 1796.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

"I take up my pen with pleasure to snatch a few of the last moments of my imprisonment to inform you that I shall be set at liberty as early as I please to-morrow morning. Pray insert in the next 'Iris' a plain unvarnished paragraph just mentioning the circumstances, and adding that, having suffered considerably in my health during the first four months of my imprisonment, I have, by the advice of the doctors, gone for a short time to Scarbro'; so that it will probably be a few weeks longer before I have the happiness of paying my personal respects to the friends of the 'Iris' . . . I am exceedingly impatient to return and ease you of those irksome burdens which you have so patiently borne for me during these six unfortunate months.

CHAP. XX.

1796.

PRISON LESSONS. — VISIT TO SCARBOROUGH. — HENRY WORMALL, THE QUAKER. — MONTGOMERY'S LETTERS TO HIM. — TO MR. ASTON AND J. P. SMITH. — WRITES AN ADDRESS FOR THE THEATRE. — "A TALE TOO TRUE." — RETURNS TO SHEFFIELD. — ADDRESSES THE READERS OF THE "IRIS."

On the 5th of July, Montgomery was released from his confinement in York Castle. In this school of adversity he learnt much — not including, however, all the lessons which Religion might have taught; but his mind was disciplined in those habits of reflection, and his genius assumed that pensive tone, which ever afterwards distinguished him as the "Muse of Sorrow's Child." At the same time, his constitution was so much shattered, that his physician recommended a sojourn at Scarborough for a few weeks: thither, accordingly, he went at once. He was followed by the respectful good wishes of every one with whom he had shared any intercourse, whether officials or prisoners, and especially of Henry Wormall*, one of eight members of the Society of Friends who were in prison for refusing to pay the costs in a tithe suit which had been decided against them. This good man, who had been the poet's frequent visitor in his "cell," was among the earliest to whom he wrote.

* This worthy Quaker kept a journal, in which he notes under the above date:—"8th mo. 5th, 1796. Went from this place

James Montgomery to Henry Wormall.

"Scarbro', July 8. 1796.

"My dear Friend Henry,

"I embrace with pleasure an opportunity to tell you that I have neither forgotten you nor your friends in York Castle. I arrived safe at this place on Tuesday evening, and by the kind recommendation of Mr. Staveley, have got board and lodging at a house where I am very comfortably accommodated. I wish you would come and smoke your pipe with me here as usual; for I assure you, notwithstanding all the pleasures of liberty, I miss one of the principal pleasures of imprisonment in the loss of your company. I have bathed once in the sea, and was not quite frightened out of my senses. I am charmed with the romantic beauties of this place, and scarcely can find time to do anything but ramble up and down admiring them. I have several times risked my neck in climbing the precipices that overhang the shore; and it is not improbable but some accident may yet prevent, for ever, my return either to York Castle or Sheffield; for I cannot resist the temptation of wandering wherever my feet will carry my head. I have not time to add much more, except that I wish, more perhaps for my own sake than yours, that you were here to enjoy with me those blessings of liberty which you have never deserved to forfeit. Remember me in the most friendly and respectful manner to

James Montgomery, a very kind and social young man: he was to me a pleasing companion, and he has left a good report behind him. Although he is qualified with good natural parts, and has had a liberal education, yet he was instructive and kind to me. I think I never had an acquaintance with any one before, that was not of my persuasion, with whom I had so much unity. I was troubled, and thought it a loss to part with him." It is a little remarkable, that although Wormall and the other Friends held religious meetings regularly on *first* and *fifth* days, Montgomery never was, nor was he ever invited to be, present with them on these occasions.

your friends John Stansfield, Joseph Brown, and the rest of your fellow sufferers, the same as if I mentioned them by name; not forgetting little Hannah, your handmaid.*

"I am, with sincere esteem,

"Your faithful friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"P.S.—Pray tell Mr. W. Ford, the tailor, that I delivered his letter duly to his wife. I forgot to tell you the principal thing, which you will be anxious to know,—namely, that I am in better health and spirits than I have found myself for these two years past. Remember me to Billy the dog, Billy the buck, Nanny, Ralph, the gulls, geese, &c.

"Henry Wormall, New Buildings, Castle of York."

James Montgomery to Joseph Aston.

"Scarbro', July 10. 1796.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"On Tuesday last I was duly liberated from my long and cruel captivity, and the same evening arrived at this delightful place. A greater contrast can scarcely be imagined than the narrow circumference of a prison and the boundless immensity of the ocean. I am charmed with the romantic beauties of this place, and my only employment here is to admire them—and to wish to leave them all, to return home as speedily as possible; thus in no situation of life have I ever met with unmixed happiness! But shadow relieves the glare of light; the bitter corrects the sweet; and solicitude softens the tone of bliss, which might otherwise transport a simple lad like me beyond the narrow limits of his reason. Part—I may say the greatest part—of the pleasure which I experienced on the day of my enlargement, arose from the solacing idea that you and many other dear

* Hannah was a little Quaker maiden who waited upon the prisoners of her own persuasion. Many years afterwards, she startled Montgomery by introducing herself to him as an elderly woman after a Bible meeting somewhere in the neighbourhood of Bradford.

and absent friends were then — perhaps at the very moment of my release — congratulating me in spirit, and welcoming the captive on his resurrection from the tomb of despondency. If you enjoyed my feelings by sympathy, I also participate of your sensations by the same pleasing emotion of the soul.

"To me the magnificence of the ocean and the awful grandeur of these winding and mountainous shores are almost entirely new spectacles; for though I was born in a sea-port, I have never had the opportunity of contemplating such sublime objects since I first came to England, at the age of five years. Though I am very weak, and easily overset, I for that very reason, as much as for curiosity, fatigue myself with rambling from morning till night. I have more than once endangered my neck, by climbing the precipices overshadowing the shore; and it is not improbable that I may yet make a fraction of my head, or reduce my bones to decimals in some of my wanderings. . . . I hope to put the last hand to my novel here, — perhaps by conveying it into the fire: if it should escape martyrdom, — and really it is not worthy of that honour, — I may perhaps find some opportunity of conveying it to you before I venture to print it for the benefit of the trunk-makers and pastry-cooks! I have some thoughts of publishing, as an experiment, a collection of the bagatelles produced in York Castle, under the title of 'Prison Amusements,' by P. P. What think you? The readers of the 'Iris' have not been disappointed with them; will that million-headed Hydra *the public* accept the sop, and not worry the poor author into the bargain? I wait your opinion on this important point. Pray write soon.

"Your sincere friend,

"J. M. G.

"Mr. Joseph Aston, Manchester."

Of the title and the subject of the "novel" alluded to in the foregoing letter, we know little beyond what the author afterwards mentions to the same correspondent, and the fact that he one day told Mr. Holland that he had just been burning the manu-

script. While in prison he also sketched and soon afterwards finished a composition intended for the stage, having perhaps the same scope as the novel, for it was entitled, the "Haunted Heads," a parody on the imitations of the German dramatists then in vogue.* We know nothing of the plan or the style of the piece; but through the intervention of a player of the name of Mansel, at that time connected with the Sheffield Theatre, it was submitted to Harris, the manager at Covent Garden, who returned it with the equivocal objection, that "it was too full of wit to be acted." Montgomery kept the MS. by him many years, and then burnt it.

While in prison he wrote "An Address" in rhyme, which was delivered in the theatre, Sheffield, on occasion of the performance of the tragedy of "Mahomet," by a party of amateurs, for the benefit of poor widows. These lines, which do not invite transcription, were the first, but not the last, from the same hand that were recited on the stage. To the end of his life Montgomery was "the widow's friend," not only both in prose and rhyme, but with his tongue and his purse as well as with his pen. He dated from Scarborough the humorous verses entitled "A Tale too True,"† by "Paul Positive," as he commonly signed himself.‡

* The "German nonsense of the day," as it is called by the author of the "Pursuits of Literature," was ridiculed in "My Night-gown and Slippers," by George Colman; and in a dramatic extravaganza, called the "Rovers," in the "Anti-Jacobin."—*Vide* note to the "Shade of Alexander Pope," 1799, p. 65.

† Works, p. 152. Whenever this form of reference occurs in the following pages, it must be understood as applying to the single-volume edition of Montgomery's Poems, published in 1850.

‡ "Paul Positive" not having been at this time generally known, the initials "P. P." were supposed to stand for "Peter Pindar," —*aut Petrus aut Diabolus*, said the uninitiated!

James Montgomery to J. P. Smith.

"Scarbro', July 17.

"You will not be angry at my impertinent advice, because it is not given under the idea of instruction or injunction, but merely that some of the hints I throw out may assist you in pursuing that path of moderation and security which no man living is more capable of following than yourself. If any riots happen before my return, do not tell any dangerous truths, nor any wilful falsehoods — the latter part of this advice is unnecessary; but you must particularly be on your guard to observe the former."

Advice of this kind will only be supposed to indicate timidity by those who forget that the writer had just suffered "fine and imprisonment," for simply describing one of those riots, the recurrence of which, in the then highly charged condition of the political atmosphere, he appears to anticipate with as little surprise as the probability of thunderstorms in the month of July. The poet never forgot this seasonable kindness of his early friend*; and they met with increased respect in after life, when religion had changed their hearts and sanctified their pursuits.

On Montgomery's return to Sheffield, and having resumed his seat at the editorial desk at the "Iris" office, he published an address to his readers, which concludes with the expression of his thanks to the magistrates who were his judges at Doncaster, for the generous indulgence extended towards him by their authority during his imprisonment. He observes:—

* Among Dr. Smith's books was a copy of the Poetæ minores Græci, Cant. 1652, on the fly-leaf of which was written:—"J. P. Smith: e dono Jacobi Montgomery, amici dilecti, poetæque præstantissimi. 1796."

"Though to the last pulse of my life I can never cease to consider both these prosecutions as the most unmerited misfortunes that ever befel me, I shall always remember with a conscious, and I trust an honest pride, that in the first instance my punishment and example were deemed necessary for the support of public justice and the preservation of the public peace: had my death under the same circumstances been found equally requisite, I would have lost my life, with as much cheerfulness as I lost my liberty, to serve my country.

"On reviewing the singular circumstances of my late case, I am happy in the reflection, that my sufferings have now offered an ample atonement to appease the wounded feelings of a gentleman, who thought he had reason to believe I had injured him by describing the actions of a nameless character: at the same time, I must frankly inform him, that he cannot look back with more triumphant satisfaction on my sufferings than I myself do at this moment. He hath cause to congratulate himself on the verdict of the jury; I am content with the verdict of the public: for whatever may be my opinion of the former, I shall never desire the sentiments of the latter to be any other than what they are."

We cannot take our leave of this affair without mentioning, that while the prosecutor was through life anxious to disabuse his character of the stigma which the transaction alluded to seemed to fasten on it, he embraced every opportunity of showing respect to Montgomery, both in public and in private. On one occasion, the gallant Colonel startled the sensitive poet not a little, by suddenly putting his hand upon him in the street, and stopping with some message or other. In another instance, when Athorpe was presiding as a magistrate in the Cutlers' Hall, he perceived Montgomery among the crowd, and sending to him by an officer, made the quondam libeller come and sit beside him on the bench,

while he wrote an advertisement for the "Iris," taking occasion, at the same time, to make some remarks on the talents of Felix Vaughan, who had just died. We need not say that Montgomery's townspeople were much struck by this incident; and, to borrow the language of another writer, "Who would not at that moment have envied his feelings? His was the triumph of proclaimed truth and innocence. And yet the circumstance reflected honour on the proper feeling and the candour of his late prosecutor."

James Montgomery to Joseph Aston.

"Sheffield, Aug. 6. 1796.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"The post that brings you this hasty effusion, will also convey to you a welcome paper message from an old friend of yours and mine, whom vindictive persecution drove from his native country to seek an asylum in a land where some traces of liberty may yet be found. How often have I repented my madness in not following his fortunes, though warmly invited! But, in truth, I am not partial to America, and I believe I shall never emigrate thither till banished by imperious necessity; and God grant that moment may never arrive. I love England, with all its disadvantages, its cares, vexations, horrors—perhaps my misfortunes themselves have only endeared me the more to my native island.

"I am once more, as you will have seen by the last 'Iris,' returned to this town. I confess frankly to you, that I feel a degree of dread and anxiety, which weighs down my spirits exceedingly, on my re-embarking in business, and again becoming the butt of malice and the mark of envy. A public character is always on the pillory, exposed to the jeers and taunts, the rotten eggs and brickbats of the mob of mankind, who are never so happy as when they are making those whom they feel to be above them miserable. I love fame; but I cannot afford to pay

the price at which it must be purchased. This *luxury*, like all the *necessaries* of life, is now so much advanced in price, that gold alone—not virtue, wit, or genius—can procure it. I have now determined to hazard the publication of my 'Prison Amusements,' and may probably add some other trifles. . . .

"Your faithful friend,

"P. P.

"Mr. Joseph Aston, Manchester."

James Montgomery to Joseph Aston.

"Sheffield, Aug. 27. 1796.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

. . . "I should certainly have acknowledged with gratitude the critical flagellation which you have so liberally bestowed on the poor 'Bramin,' had I not been in daily expectation of receiving back from the hands of a friend the MS. which I half promised to send to your 'house of correction.' I intended to take a place for it in the coach to Manchester, and at the same time send you a present of as handsome a dry-beating as any critic could wish from the hands of an enraged poet. . . . My 'Prison Amusements' will be published both by subscription and otherwise. When I send the MS., I will enclose some proposals and a specimen of the work. I intend to alter the 'Bramin' considerably, add several new images and fables, and, I hope, improve the whole. Your criticisms will not be forgotten: even where they are not adopted, I shall deliberately reconsider the passages at which they are levelled. I have not at present any idea of visiting Fairfield [a Moravian establishment]: there are many persons there whom I know, and even esteem, but none with whom I am particularly intimate. Besides, I have spent so much in a late excursion to York for the pleasure of my worst enemy, that I have nothing to squander on journeys for my own pleasure at present. If you ever have to make a journey to Chapel-en-le-Frith, Castleton, &c., I will meet you, with more joy than you can easily imagine, at any of those places. I

suppose, since you are 'up to the lips in business' (like Dr. Graham's earth-bathers), you have relinquished every idea of visiting Sheffield? Chance may some time bring us together, whether we will or no; but neither chance nor design shall ever rob you of the friendship of

"Yours, most sincerely,

"J. M. G.

"Mr. Joseph Aston, Manchester."

Under date of Sept. 6th, Montgomery wrote a letter to Aston, with the MS. already mentioned; and again on Oct. 18th, when he acknowledges the return of the novel in question, and which had never yet had a title! "I have thought," says he, "of the 'Haunted Heads; or, the History of Twelve Months.'"

James Montgomery to Henry Wormall.

"Sheffield, Sept. 19. 1796.

"MY DEAR FRIEND HENRY,

"I have too long waited for this opportunity of writing to you, and have now very little leisure to write. Be assured, however, that so far from being forgotten by me, scarcely a day passes but you occupy some place in my thoughts. As often as I remember York Castle, I always call to mind the many pleasing, peaceful hours we spent together there. How happy should I be to know, that you were now, like myself, recalling the scenes of that dreadful place, like a dream that is past! But to the will of the Supreme Disposer of all events we must patiently and humbly submit. He who is Omnipresent, is felt in the dungeon as much [as surely] as in heaven itself; and He, who can do all things, can make a prison a paradise. Such I doubt not you have often found it; such I hope you find it every day; and such I most earnestly pray you may always find it, while your lot is cast within those gloomy walls.

"I acknowledge with gratitude a very kind letter re-

ceived by me from you, since my return to Sheffield. It was exceedingly acceptable, because it assured me of the continuance of your friendship and esteem, and informed me that you sometimes think of our former intercourse.

"In writing to you, I confess I feel as if I were addressing a friend, from whom I am now perhaps separated for ever, at least in this world.* Should you happen to come to Sheffield, or I go to York, either willingly or *unwillingly*, it will afford me unspeakable happiness once more to see and converse with you. Improbable as it may appear that we shall ever meet again, it is very far from being impossible. Young as I am, I have seen so much of the fluctuating uncertainty of human events, that I cannot, for my own part, build one single hope on the expectation of the future from the appearance of the present. Imprudence, an honest but mistaken zeal for truth, may send me as suddenly as before, to York Castle, as a prisoner. Unforeseen misfortunes may hurry me to that den of despondency, that tomb of the living, as a debtor? But why should I attempt to make myself uneasy, by anticipating what perhaps may never happen; and what, even if it should happen, may be again endured and overcome with as much ease as former difficulties.

"Misfortunes in general come too soon, when they come at all; and for my own part, my dear friend, I have cares, vexations, and concerns enough at all times on my hands, without anticipating such as may never occur. Since I arrived at home, I have been occasionally much indisposed, and on Saturday last I was seized with such a sudden and dreadful fit of sickness, that I really was uncertain whether I should survive it. I am better to-day, but extremely weak. I hope you enjoy the blessing of good health, and that your dear family at home are likewise well. Pray give my best and kindest respects to all your friends suffering in the cause of conscience with yourself. It will be a pleasure to me to think that I am not entirely forgotten by

* They never did meet after their parting in the Castle-yard.

those worthy sufferers, particularly Joseph Brown and John Stansfield. Remember me also, if you please, to little Hannah, if she is still with you. When you see Mr. W. Clayton, our worthy governor, remember me to him with gratitude, for his former kindness; also my best compliments to Mr. Staveley [the gaoler], and inform him that I safely delivered his present to Mr. Geo. Hawley. Give poor Nanny, and Billy, and Ralph, each a crust of bread in my name, and tell the gulls I have not forgotten them.

"I am, dear Henry,

"Your sincere and faithful friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"P.S.—I shall always be happy to hear from you.

"Henry Wormall, Castle, York."

James Montgomery to Henry Wormall.

"Sheffield, Oct. 13. 1796.

"MY DEAR FRIEND HENRY,

"I am sorry to have the present opportunity of writing to you. The bearer, Luke Palfreyman*, is my friend; and as he has had the misfortune to be committed for three months to your Castle, I earnestly request you to show him any little kindness in your power. His crime is, having, in a moment of passion, said some words which the magistrates here interpreted into disrespect towards themselves. I do not pretend to justify the expressions he used on the occasion; but as a brother in distress, I recommend him to you. He is a man of very good character, and possessed of considerable property; being in a large hosiery business, and having some freehold property besides.

"I know the simple circumstance of his being a prisoner would alone induce you to alleviate the weight of his misfortune as far as lies in your power. I am also convinced that you will feel double satisfaction in serving him, when you know that it will oblige me, your former friend and fellow-sufferer. Your kind attention to me, your welcome

* *Vide* p. 194, *ante*.

visits, and your cheerful conversation will never be obliterated from my memory. You will not have it in your power to become as intimate with him as you were with me, as he will probably be closely confined; but I do not recommend him to you as a companion, but as a person whom I wish you to serve as much as you can conveniently. I believe him to be a strictly honest man: some of the first and most respectable gentlemen in Sheffield interfered in his behalf to accommodate the affair; but the magistrates were inexorable. He has twice stepped forward, unsolicited by me, to give bail for me; the first time he did it we were strangers to each other: he is at present one of the bondsmen for my good behaviour.

"I acknowledge with thanks the receipt of a very little, but very welcome letter from you, by one Stevenson. Since I wrote last, I have suffered exceedingly from ill health. . . . I hope you enjoy perfect health, and as much happiness as a good conscience in a prisoner can afford. Remember me in the kindest terms to your suffering friends, and be assured of the constant esteem and respect of

"Your sincere friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"Henry Wormall, New Buildings,
Castle of York."

James Montgomery to Henry Wormall.

"Sheffield, Dec. 12. 1796.

"DEAR AND HONOURED FRIEND,

"If my long silence has induced you to believe that I could be so ungrateful as to forget my friends in York Castle, I hope the receipt of this will prove to your satisfaction that I have not. Seldom indeed do I lie down to sleep without calling to remembrance the various scenes which passed during my residence with you. Many circumstances I recollect with peculiar pleasure, and my mind dwells upon them with a delight which none but those can feel, who like me have been unfortunate, and like me have found such friends, even in misfortune, as to endear some of its

most bitter scenes. Whenever I am uneasy and afflicted at home, which is very often the case, for you know yourself that I am too apt to be gloomy and discontented—when I am thus, I immediately look back at York Castle, and picture to myself those moments in it when I was the most miserable. When, on the contrary, I am cheerful and contented in mind, I fly back with pleasure to my little room in your building. I fancy I see you seated beside me, smoking your pipe and winding your cotton, with poor Billy lying at our feet; and though we are many miles asunder at present, and perhaps may never, never meet again, I sometimes imagine our old conversations restored, and think we are unfolding our hearts to each other. The remembrance of these things will be one of the principal pleasures of my future life, whether it be marked, as hitherto, with trials and persecutions, or whether better, more delightful days await me. Absence, instead of weakening the respect and attachment which I conceived for you in prison, has strengthened, and, in proportion as the time becomes distant, will, I hope, strengthen it more and more.

"I have observed, with much concern, the slow progress of the Bill now before the House of Commons, in your favour: it is adjourned, and adjourned again, so often, and under such trifling pretences, that I do really fear it will never even reach the House of Lords.* I believe you are prepared for the worst, Henry, and that you are as much resigned as a man and a Christian ought to be under such severe and

* The Bill referred to was brought into Parliament by Mr. Serjeant Adair, Oct. 17. 1796, and was almost identical with one introduced by the learned gentleman in the previous session, and which had been rejected by the House of Lords. Its avowed object was not to free the Quaker from liability to pay tithes, but to compel the claimant to distrain for the amount, instead of being allowed to imprison the offender. After a somewhat lengthened debate in the House of Commons, on the 24th Feb. and 6th March, 1797, the Bill was thrown out. Of course it could only have reached the case of the prisoners, even if it had passed, by a special or retrospective clause.

undeserved calamity. I wish for your deliverance; but if that wish must not be gratified, I wish you may always be enabled, even in the agonising hours of sickness, and perhaps of death*, to bear your sufferings—or rather to triumph over them—with as much fortitude as you have hitherto done. I hope your worthy friends and brethren in misfortune support their spirits and submit to their cruel and infamous fate with their wonted cheerfulness. Remember me most kindly to them all, and assure them of my warm and undiminished friendship.

"I am happy to learn that you have done your best to serve and console poor Mr. Palfreyman in his distress; I wish your time and that of all your friends were as short as his. I shall be exceedingly rejoiced to hear from you as often as you feel the least inclination to write either by post or by friends.

"I am, sincerely, your faithful friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"Henry Wormall, Castle, York."

* This was not a mere idle sentimentalism: the release of any of the prisoners appeared at this time improbable enough; and one of them, John Wilkinson, died in prison.

CHAP. XXI.

1797.

RHYMING BAGATELLES. — PUBLICATION OF "PRISON AMUSEMENTS." — MS. NOVEL. — DEDICATIONS. — FELIX VAUGHAN. — LETTERS TO WORMALL AND ASTON.—EXTINCTION OF THE "SHEFFIELD COURANT." — GENERAL INFIRMARY. — MONTGOMERY'S HYMN AND EPILOGUE. — HIS TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF DR. BROWNE.

THE pair of poetical trifles which follow were published at this time: they appeared anonymously; but Montgomery has attested his authorship of them in the copies before us. The subject of the first is partly borrowed from the French of La Motte:—

"*The Fox and the Lion.—A Tale.*

"A Fox, pursued by hounds and men,
Escaped — into a Lion's den.
His majesty rose up to greet him,
And leisurely prepared to eat him.
To eat him? What was Reynard's crime?
He just arrived in pudding time!
'You're welcome, Sir, in honest truth,
You're very welcome to my tooth.'
'Heaven bless your royal chops,' replies
The trembling Fox, with rainy eyes:
'Spare me one moment, to relate
My dear departed father's fate:
A hare sought refuge from the hounds—
As I have done—within his grounds;

He—unlike you—a wicked sinner,
Devoured the fugitive for dinner,
When lo! a bone—as mine may not—
Choked the old rascal on the spot!'
'Live!' cried the Lion;—'live! the bone
That killed your father, saves his son!'
This fable proves, if rightly taken,
That wit sometimes may save the bacon.

"Sheffield, Feb. 22. 1797."

The other bagatelle is thus introduced: "An acquaintance of mine, who is fond of the Linnæan mode of characterising objects of Natural History, has amused himself with drawing up the following definition of man: *simia sine caudâ: pedibus posticis ambulans: gregarius, omnivorus, inquietus, mendax, furax, rapax, salax, pugnax, artium variarum capax, animalium reliquorum hostis, sui ipsius inimicus acerrimus.*" Montgomery translated these terms for his readers, as follows:

"Man is an animal unfledged,
A monkey with his tail abridged;
A thing that walks on spindle legs,
With bones as brittle, sir, as eggs;
His body flexible and limber,
And headed with a knob of timber;
A being frantic and unquiet,
And very fond of beef and riot;
Rapacious, lustful, rough, and martial,
To lies, and lying scoundrels partial!
By nature formed with splendid parts,
To rise in science—shine in arts;
Yet so confounded cross and vicious,
A mortal foe to all his species!
His own best *friend*, and, you must know,
His own worst *enemy* by being *so!*"

A volume entitled "Prison Amusements, by Paul

Positive," and alluded to in one of the letters to Aston, was published at the beginning of this year. The author's personal history, wherever known, had prepared the way to a favourable reception of a work which, besides the interest of personal allusion, exhibited the earnest of future success. The contents indicate twenty-four pieces, many of which, as the Preface states, "were composed in bitter moments, amid the horrors of a gaol, under the pressure of sickness. They were the transcripts of melancholy feelings—the warm effusions of a bleeding heart. The writer amused his imagination with attiring his sorrows in verse, that, under the romantic appearance of fiction, he might sometimes forget that his misfortunes were real." In this volume, the "Pleasures of Imprisonment," already mentioned, formed a conspicuous feature: the piece was afterwards corrected, and much abridged, by the author. But the "Bramin," in two cantos, is the longest and most elaborate composition. Of this poem also, brief extracts only have been reprinted by the author, his maturer judgment having led him to omit many of those glowing poetical illustrations of the Hindoo mythology which characterise the original design. For instance, the Sage, on the banks of the Ganges, having "unlocked the treasures of his mind," in the fragment reprinted by Montgomery, calls upon his auditors to—

"————behold
Examples of the mysteries I unfold."

* * * *

"See in light gambols, tripping o'er the lawn,
Yon beauteous doe, and wildly wanton fawn:
Swift as fantastic meteors sweep the sky,
They spring, they charge, they turn, retire, or fly.
In this delightful valley dwelt the pair,
A gentle mother and her daughter fair.

That stately deer, whose branching honours spread
High o'er his nodding brows and graceful head,
Once shone the glory of the rural scene,
The gallant monarch of the village green;
He wooed yon doe to his enamoured arms,
A virgin then in all her spring of charms.
That playful fawn, so beautiful and young,
An only child from their embraces sprung;
Twelve circling suns renewed their bright career,
And found the lovers happier every year;
While each fond parent in their daughter's face
The other's budding beauties loved to trace.

"Soft as the dulcet fumes of spices flow
From Ceylon's groves when evening breezes blow:
Mild as the sunshine of the vernal day,
Their gilded moments sweetly stole away.
But, ah! my sorrowing bosom bleeds to tell
How, warm in youth, the vigorous husband fell:
Fell,—as the cedar, flourishing on high,
Stoops to the fierce red bolt that splits the sky.
The prostrate ruins load the mournful ground,
And all its blasted glories perish round.
Thus set the bridegroom from the noon of life,
Nor long survived the self-devoted wife!
I saw the mourner mount his funeral pyre,
Kiss the cold corpse, and triumph in the fire;
One farewell tear to parting life she shed,
Sunk on his breast, and bowed her dying head.
So were the sun extinguished from his sphere,
The widowed moon would perish on his bier!
The daughter next, in beauty's morning bloom,
Wept o'er their loss, then followed to the tomb:
Thus fades an orphan violet on the plain,
When the plough shears the parent-roots in twain!
Now changed to deer, renewed the lovers find
All the lost happiness they left behind."

If the simile printed in italics be not one of the

finest, it is assuredly one of the most perfect to be found in any poem; while the superstition which it illustrates is one of the most intensely interesting elements in the history of human error. How little did Montgomery think, when he wrote the couplet alluded to with such seeming complacency, that he would, in a few years, become one of the most earnest and pathetic denouncers of this cruel system of female immolation —much less that he would live to rejoice in the abolition of *sutteeism* by the British Government. Canto ii. continues these "examples" through 246 lines more. The fable of the serpent Soto, fascinating small birds to bring them within the reach of his jaws, is appropriately introduced, and the moral which is drawn from it, striking. The reptile is thus finely described:

"Lo, emanating from the rustling brake,
Glides, like a ray of light, a glistening snake;
His pearly scales unnumbered hues unfold—
Green, crimson, purple, and resplendent gold,
In gay confusion, vanish, change, unite,
With all the magic subtilty of light;
Graceful he rolls his undulating train,
Bright as a living rainbow on the plain:
E'en thus, in luxury's soft, delicious bowers,
The serpent Pleasure plays among the flowers.

* * * * *

"That horrid snake was once a subtile slave,
Who played with fools the fool, with knaves the knave;
A flatterer vile, whose lubricated tongue
With honey poisoned, and with kindness stung;
A treacherous friend, who with a kiss betrayed;
A foe whose looks were deep in ambush laid;
With infant innocence he masked his guile,
Stabbed with a glance, and murdered with a smile.
As those deluded birds to death he drew,
So with his eye the smooth assassin slew."

The ancient Pythagorean doctrine of the metempsychosis, so pregnant with poetical associations, has perhaps never been more gracefully used than by Montgomery in these lines. The theme was suggested to the poet by his friend Aston, who had read a paper which appeared in the "Iris," under the title of the "Transmigrations of Indur," a being who describes his feelings and adventures during several incarnations in the form of different animals: a consciousness of his own personal individuality remaining in each phase of his brutal existence.* The preface to this volume concludes with an intimation that, "should these humble essays obtain only a moderate share of public favour, the writer may be emboldened to risk the publication of another more voluminous work, which was also composed during the long leisure of imprisonment." The "more voluminous work," writes Montgomery to Mr. Holland, "noticed in the preface to the 'Prison Amusements,' was a Novel in four volumes, written at various intervals between 1790 and 1796, and entirely remodelled in the latter. It has never seen daylight in print (nor in any other sense, for twenty years past), nor shall it." "This work," said he to the friend just mentioned, "I intend to burn; and should have done so long since, but have never yet had a heart to commit to the flames a manu-

* Among the poems which were much admired on their first appearance in the "Prison Amusements," was the "Soliloquy of a Water-Wagtail on the Walls of York Castle." It is not very easy to conceive how the verses under this title could find their way into the memory of a royal personage; and yet the burthen of each stanza is so peculiar, that its echo, in the sixth and last of the following lines, attributed to the Princess Amelia, almost precludes the idea of the resemblance being merely accidental:—

"Hear your sovereign's proclamation,
All good subjects, young and old;

script which has at one period cost me so much labour and anxiety." It was ultimately destroyed, as before stated.

The "History of Dedications" would form a curious chapter in the annals of literature; especially if it were possible to give a transcript of the feelings of a dedicator through a graduated scale of success or disappointment, from the first appearance of an address or inscription, to the period in which an author fixes in perpetuity, or cancels for ever, the name of a patron or friend, which in some moment of gratitude or of hope he had published along with his own—but more ostentatiously—as the harbinger or companion of his literary immortality.

The "Prison Amusements" were dedicated, appropriately enough, in the following terms: —

To Felix Vaughan, Esq.

"SIR,

"Permit me to inscribe these *trifles* to you. They would possess as much merit as they ought, were they

> I'm the Lord of the Creation—
> I—a Water-Wagtail bold!
> All around, and all you see,
> All the world was made for me," &c.—MONTGOMERY.
>
> "Unthinking, idle, wild, and young,
> I laughed, and danced, and talked, and sung,
> And proud of health, of freedom vain,
> Dreamt not of sorrow, care, or pain,
> Concluding in those hours of glee
> That all the world was made for me.
>
> "But when the hour of trial came,
> When sickness shook this trembling frame,
> When Folly's gay pursuits were o'er,
> And I could dance and sing no more,
> It then occurred how sad 'twould be
> Were this world only made for me."—AMELIA.

worthy of your notice. Imperfect as they are, you will not disdain to accept them as a tribute of grateful esteem from *one* who is unfashionable enough to write a dedication without flattery, though not so unfashionable as to conclude without a compliment to himself, in telling the world that he is, with sincere respect,

"Your obliged friend and servant,

"J. M."

This dedication Montgomery never reprinted, though he always recollected with gratitude, and spoke with pleasure of the powerful and eloquent though unsuccessful appeals of this eminent barrister, on his own trials.*

James Montgomery to Henry Wormall.

"Sheffield, March 21. 1797.

"DEAR FRIEND HENRY,

"I was favoured with a very kind letter from you last week, for which you will accept my cordial thanks. My long silence has partly proceeded from constitutional indolence at some times, and the hurry of business at other times. I have had much ill health during the winter, which reduced both my spirits and my constitution very low: but I have not yet forgotten you, and your kind attention to me in York Castle. The only return I can offer for your affectionate services, is a grateful heart, which will never cease to remember you, and pray for your happiness.

"I have enclosed, as a small token of my esteem, a copy

* This gentleman was suspected, at one time, to have been more than merely *professionally* sincere in the sentiments which he so eloquently delivered during the trial at York. He was, in fact, supposed to be implicated with Horne Tooke, Hardy, and others, who were afterwards tried for high treason. This matter was canvassed by the Privy Council, when it was ascertained that Felix Vaughan had stopped short of the risks which others had run. It was on this occasion that Mr. Dundas exclaimed, in the following Latin verse, containing an appropriate play on the initial word—

"FELIX *quem faciunt aliena pericula cautum.*"

of my 'Prison Amusements,' of which I beg your acceptance. The perusal of some pieces may be interesting to you; they will bring the writer to your remembrance. I am very sorry, though I cannot say I am surprised, to see that the Bill in your favour has been thrown out in the House of Commons, in a manner unworthy of that honourable House. But this is a subject I mention of course, though I do not like to dwell on it, as it necessarily connects with it the melancholy idea that the long-expected period of your deliverance from captivity is not yet arrived. May Heaven, in compassion to your unmerited sufferings, and as a reward of your patient fortitude, hasten the happy moment of your release! May you soon, very soon, return to the bosom of your dear family, and then from the peaceful shore of domestic security you may look back with calm composure on that sea of troubles, on which you have so long been tossed without suffering shipwreck! These are the fervent wishes of my heart; but wishes in this case are of no avail.

Perhaps, Henry, you and I may never meet again in this world. This is a reflection which I cannot help indulging whenever I think of you; and it sometimes brings tears into my eyes: but should this be the case, — which God forbid! — be assured of my unchangeable esteem and friendship. If my affairs will permit, I have some thoughts of a journey to Scarbro' again next summer: my health requires it; but I cannot do altogether as I please, — if I could, I should have visited you at the assizes. I wished very much to do so, and had almost made up my mind; but circumstances prevented me. — I must conclude: pray write as soon, and as often as you please, to

"Your faithful friend,
"J. MONTGOMERY."

James Montgomery to his Brother Ignatius.

"Sheffield, March 27. 1797.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,

"I have so long delayed writing to you, that I am almost ashamed to write at all. Be assured, however, that my

long and perhaps inexcusable silence has not been owing to disrespect or want of affection. I think very often of you, and never without feeling myself tenderly interested in your welfare. Your last kind letter pleased me very much: I learned from it that your mind is more tranquil than it appeared to be at the renewal of our correspondence, when you wrote to me in York Castle, and at Scarbro'. I have suffered too much by indulging a natural and even habitual melancholy, to encourage you to harbour any such gloomy emotions: it unnerves the body and unmans the soul; quenches all energy of character; sinks every hope into despondency, and renders the victim of its fury as burthensome to himself as he is useless to society. Shun it, my dear brother—shun it by all means. Alas! I cannot practise the advice I am now administering to you. The difficulties and embarrassments of business often overwhelm me with care. The disappointments and mortifications which hunt me through life are continually torturing my mind. Sometimes I have the courage to wrestle with this dangerous habit, and almost overcome it for a few days; but it returns to haunt me again. I will drop this unwelcome subject.

"I am divorced from politics, as I think you yourself may perceive by the complexion of my newspaper for these several months past. I will never sacrifice my independence, nor will I join the hue and cry of any party. My principles are precisely the same as they always have been since I could distinguish good and evil; but I trust I understand them better, and shall be enabled in future to practise them with equal openness, but with more circumspection, than formerly.

"You will have perceived that I have published the little volume of my 'Prison Amusements.' If you cannot point out any more eligible mode of conveyance, I will send a few copies for the persons with whose names you have favoured me as subscribers, by the common carriers. I hope you will not follow my bad example, but will write very soon after receiving this. I declare, if I were not anxious to hear from you, I should have scarcely written even now; for, to

speak honestly, I am not fond of letter-writing, even to my best friends; but be assured there is nothing can give me more sincere satisfaction than to receive letters from you.

"Your faithful friend and brother,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"Mr. Ignatius Montgomery, Bedford."

Ignatius afterwards became a teacher in the school at Fulneck, where he remained until 1804, when he went in a similar capacity to Grace Hill. Before sailing for Ireland, he solicited his elder brother's blessing, which was imparted in these terms:—

"A blessing, brother, ere we part,
A farewell blessing you require:
O! if there lives in this cold heart
One spark of all our father's fire;
That spark, an humble sacrifice,
In prayer for you I send above;
'T will bring a blessing from the skies,
The blessing of THE GOD OF LOVE.

"Oct. 13. 1804."

Whether any other letters were addressed by Montgomery to his Quaker friend at this period is uncertain —we have found none. As we have stated, John Wilkinson died in prison; the seven surviving Friends were liberated, after having been confined about two years—liberated from gaol, but not freed from suffering; for distraints were still made upon their property to satisfy ecclesiastical claims made against them. This was especially the case with respect to Henry Wormall, who "continued after his enlargement to correspond with Thomas Bulman" of Irthington, a good Quaker, who had comforted his brethren by his Christian epistles while they were in York Castle, "and whom he informs, that when the distraint was made upon him, upwards of 240*l.* were taken from him, which was nearly his

all; but, adds he, '*they returned my wife the cradle, and the rocking chair.*' Such were the sparings of the ruthless hand of ecclesiastical persecution.!"*

It appears, from the work just quoted, that Henry Wormall, who had for several years taken the "Sheffield Iris," found his means so reduced, that he wrote to Montgomery to discontinue sending the paper: the latter replied immediately, as follows: —

James Montgomery to Henry Wormall.

"Sheffield, Jan. 7. 1808.

"My dear Friend Henry,

"I have just received your letter, which both delighted and affected me exceedingly. The newspaper shall be discontinued according to your order, but not my friendship to you; it does not hang on so slight a thread. No, Henry; I feel as if it was formed for eternity. Our hearts have often flowed together, and been as one in conversation; and mine still burns within me whenever I write to you. The money was right, and I thank you for it. I am very sorry to learn that you have suffered so much affliction from lameness; but you trust in God—continue to trust in Him, for He will never leave you nor forsake you.

"As a token of His remembrance, I have enclosed a five-pound Bank of England note, which I hope will be seasonable and serviceable to you in your present low estate. Accept it, Henry, not from me, but from Him who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, and by suffering all the ills of poverty (for He had not whereon to lay His head), sanctified them to His people. For His sake, and in His name, receive it; for His sake, and in His name, I send it. I assure you, my dear friend, that I feel far more pleasure in being, on this occasion, the minister of His bounty to you, than I could possibly derive from any other disposal of this small sum, which I considered to be as sacredly your property, from the moment when He put it

* Life of Thomas Bulman, p. 51.

into my heart to send it, as it had been mine before. I can well spare it from that little portion of worldly wealth of which He has made me steward; and I know that the prudent use of it will add something to your temporal comforts. But I am ashamed to say so much about it. God, who gives it, bless it to you! It will oblige me if you will inform me by post of its safe arrival in your hands. I shall therefore anxiously expect to hear from you in the course of a few days; a single line will be sufficient; I charge you not to distress yourself with writing a long letter. Farewell. Peace to you and all your family.

"I am very truly your friend,

"JAMES MONTGOMERY."

We have two long letters addressed by Montgomery to Aston in the month of March, both on general topics: the next is dated July 8th, in which, after an elaborate protest against imputed "indifference" to the friendship of his sensitive correspondent, the writer says:—

"Being summoned to attend a meeting of printers at Tadcaster, I could not resist the temptation of proceeding from thence to York, to revisit the place of my captivity; to hail the venerable walls of my bastile; and once more enjoy 'the pleasures of imprisonment.' There is a tender melancholy pleasure in reviewing past misfortunes, and tracing the scenes where we have formerly suffered. I feel an affection for every spot of ground where I have been unhappy; an attachment even to the dungeon which I entered with horror, and quitted with transport: but dear to my very soul is the snug little apartment, which I occupied during the last five months of my captivity;—the cage in which I sang of sorrow, till sorrow became familiar and delightful! O, my dear friend, when distracted with the cares of business, and wounded with the disappointments of life, I look back with tender recollection on my prison hours; and had you not *laughed* me out of *crying*, in your critique on my novel, I could weep that they were past. I could

fill a sheet with my observations and reflections, as I rambled round the Castle-yard, and recognised the pleasing animals, my former fellow-prisoners, who grazed on the green, and which I used to feed with my hands. The buck — the poor, battered, miserable buck—is grown plump, and strong, and beautiful; and, I am informed, is a very good husband to Nanny the doe, one of my most favourite companions — she will soon become a mother. The little dog, who forsook his friends and family in the city to come and live with me, happened to be in the yard with his master when I entered; he recognised me in a moment, sprung into my arms, and almost devoured me with joy!"

Acknowledging a letter from Aston, Montgomery says, Aug. 20th:—

"You challenge me to meet you at Chapel-en-le-Frith. I accept the gauntlet which you have thrown down; I will meet you—if I live. . . . Can I hope to obtain a favour of you at our meeting? Have you influence enough to procure me a copy of the musical air which your friend has been pleased to adapt to the simple warblings of my poor Robin? . . . I once was a smattering musician myself; I thrummed the harpsichord for three years at school, and afterwards almost *blew out my brains* with—an *hautboy!* I have, however, long neglected practising myself, but I am passionately enamoured of good music."

This taste accompanied him through life, and was manifestly of advantage to him as a hymnologist; but we do not recollect that he anywhere mentions it in his published works—certainly nowhere so decisively as in this letter. The meeting of the two friends took place, as stated in an after letter, at Buxton; and on the 21st of September, Montgomery, in allusion to it, says,—

"So far from having changed my opinion concerning my Manchester correspondent, our late interview has confirmed

every pleasing presentiment which I had entertained of your manners, your conversation, and disposition: it has exalted my friendship for your moral virtues, and improved my esteem and respect for your talents. . . . One expression in your letter struck me too forcibly to be passed by entirely without notice. After remarking the general coincidence of sentiment between us, and which I am sure you cannot contemplate with more satisfaction than I do, you say you do not include *Faith*. This is a delicate subject: I remember you once before—when I was at York—felt my pulse on this head. I then, if I remember right, confessed, with the confidence which your ingenuous conduct towards me naturally inspired, that Religion was a theme of such doubt and perplexity to me, that I found it impossible to rest, in any form of faith, my happiness in this world, and my hopes in another. [Here follow five lines, obliterated in the original letter.] I do not hesitate to say that a most solemn conviction is impressed upon my heart, that Christianity—pure, and humble, and holy, as we find it in the discourses of Jesus and His apostles—is equally worthy of its Divine Author, and beneficial to mankind. I believe no human being, of any other profession, can ever be half so happy as a true believer in it—and why? Because his faith is *certain; no doubt* of the *truth* of his religion can possibly remain on his mind; whereas the most enlightened deistical philosopher is at best but [half a line crossed out] a half convert to the opinion he professes. He believes—not that there *is* a God—that the soul of man is immortal, but that there *may be* a God—that the soul of man *may be* immortal: he hopes for, not expects, a day of retribution: consequently the spur to his virtues is blunt; and the bridle to his vices weaker than if he were assured of the future reward of the one, and punishment of the other. But my paper is full."

We have thought it best to give the foregoing passage; it forms, we believe, one of the strongest proofs extant of that temporary relaxation of evangelical sen-

timent, to which the writer so often adverted in after life with penitential tears and deep humiliation. His correspondent—who was an Unitarian—would probably have subscribed to every word of the above confession, which rather halts beside than directly opposes "the truth, as it is in Jesus."

The friends met and spent a day or two together at Castleton: and in a letter dated October 10th, Montgomery writes to Aston:—"I am anxious to hear your opinion concerning the late events in France. I know not precisely whether my reflections in the 'Iris' on that subject have been just: I wrote them, I can honestly say, with at least as much sincerity as warmth;—but the aristocrats extol them to the skies; they are praised by all the powdered pates in Sheffield; and the 'Iris' is now called an excellent, an admirable, a constitutional paper! Praise from such a quarter almost inclines me to suspect that I have gone too far; but my conscience sanctions every syllable which my heart dictated on the occasion. I hate and abhor tyranny under every form, and in every shape; but in none so much as under a Republican disguise: the monster then becomes a hydra with a million heads." In a long letter of a later date, he says to the same correspondent:—"You do not know the thousandth part of me. I am dull, melancholy, and phlegmatic by nature; and am grown indolent and ill-humoured by habit. Disappointments at which you would laugh, in the early period of my life have sickened all my hopes, and clouded all my prospects; my mind is grown quite hypochondriacal; and sunk in listlessness, or only roused occasionally by the horrors of religious feelings, I languish away life without comfort to myself, or benefit to others."

During this and the following year, the editorial remarks in the "Iris" do not present any striking characteristics; two reasons may be assigned for this:— in the first place, Northall, proprietor of the rival journal, became a bankrupt, and the paper in which such rancorous hostility against Montgomery had been manifested, unable to bear the price of sixpence instead of fourpence, to which newspapers were now advanced in consequence of additional taxation, was discontinued, which put an end to much unpleasant and unprofitable collision. The principal cause, however, is apparently to be found in the local interest excited by the opening and endowment of the Sheffield General Infirmary, recently erected. This event was of sufficient importance to justify the attention and support bestowed upon it by all parties*: and week after week were the columns of the "Iris" open to the details of its progress, while the pen of the editor was unwearied in advocating the objects of this noble asylum. He also wrote a hymn, which was sung at its formal opening.†

On the evening of November 27th, the comedy of "The Wonder" was performed at the Theatre, Sheffield, for the benefit of the INFIRMARY: the following *Epilogue*, written by Montgomery, was spoken on this occasion:—

"While the bright sallies of the comic muse
A gay delight o'er all the scene diffuse;

* It may be amusing to mention that this great and good work *did* encounter one remora in the advertisement of Dr. Graham, of "Earth-Bathing" notoriety. This redoubtable quack told the inhabitants of Sheffield that he would disclose to them certain "easily practicable matters," that would be of more real service in saving life and limb, "than if he solely were to build and endow the largest infirmary in the world!"

† "When like a stranger on our sphere," &c.—*Orig. Hymns.*

While wit's quick lightning points Thalia's dart,
And wounds so sweetly, that it mends the heart;
You, O my generous friends! this evening know
Joys more refined than genius can bestow;
Sublime sensations warm each feeling breast.
Thrice happy you! because the poor are blest!
For every smile that cheers this lively place
Shall kindle comfort in a mourner's face!
Some pleasures sting—but this shall leave behind
A sweet memorial, soothing to the mind.

"Your bounteous hands have reared a friendly dome;
For Want a refuge, for Disease a home!
Now bid the springs of consolation flow
Through every channel of diffusive woe!
Throw wide the portals;—there let Mercy stand,
To welcome all the sorrow in the land!
Compassion there shall kindly charm to rest
The aching head, and agonising breast;
Quench the fierce fires that scorch the victim's veins,
Compose his horrors, and assuage his pains;
With soft indulgence make the sick man's bed,
And gently pillow poor Misfortune's head;
Stay the destroying angel's arm, to save
A sinking wretch, and disappoint the grave.

"To you, ye brilliant fair! I now appeal,
Who gaily think, but exquisitely feel;
Whom Nature formed of every smiling grace
To soften man, and humanise the race!
While you with Love's almighty sceptre reign,
Your sway by kind Benevolence maintain!
When that meek spirit dwells, a heavenly guest,
In the pure mansion of a female breast,
Quickens each nerve, each tender feeling fires,
Expands the heart, and all the soul inspires;
Now rich in charms exalted Beauty glows,
A pitying angel in a world of woes!

Then beams the radiant eye with lovely light,
Clear as the moon amid the tranquil night;
Mild as the star, that gilds the morn of May,
And powerful as the sun that rules the day!
Earth knows no other object half so fair,
And heaven can scarcely boast a brighter there!

"May every fair one thus improve her charms,
And him she loves be worthy of her arms!
Then round Britannia's wave-embosomed isle
Shall Bounty triumph and Affection smile."

In connection with these records of Montgomery's early advocacy of the interests of humanity, may be mentioned the kindness which he received at this period from the late Dr. Browne, one of the most zealous and efficient patrons of the Infirmary, as well as the urbane and gentlemanly leader in most of the meetings of the respectable inhabitants of Sheffield. To the memory of this venerable man — one of the last members of the "old school" in the place — Montgomery paid a just and grateful tribute, at the close of his editorial career in 1825. After adverting to "the delirium of those evil days, and that strife of evil tongues" which surrounded him, and to the manner in which he was made "the heir to the treasured worth that was ready to burst upon the head of his predecessor" Gales, Montgomery thus proceeds: —

"It is true, that, amidst all these tribulations, I had many ardent and active friends, by whose help I was carried through my legal adversities with small pecuniary loss, and with all the consolation which kind offices could afford. One instance of rare magnanimity I must mention — the late Dr. Browne stood by me through every perplexity. He was then at the head of the town, and having the command of all the public business, he never failed to throw as much of it into my hands as circumstances would warrant. What rivals soli-

cited, and enemies would have intercepted, he resolutely and gratuitously bestowed upon me, though I never asked a boon of him, nor in any way compromised my own independence to secure his patronage. Even when I was under prosecution, and in prison, at the instance of those with whom he was politically connected, he never changed countenance towards me, nor omitted an opportunity of serving me. The resolutions and addresses of loyal meetings he has repeatedly brought away with him to my office, jocularly telling me what battles he had been fighting in my behalf to win them. The manliness with which these favours were conferred, gave them a grace and a value beyond what I could estimate at the time, and probably secured for me a measure of personal respect in the town which otherwise I might not have so easily obtained. It was in the crisis of my affairs, and during the heedlessness of youth respecting ulterior consequences, that he thus delicately and dexterously aided me, both against my adversaries and myself. Meanwhile I did not shrink from expressing my own opinions in the very newspapers which he made the vehicle of his when at variance with mine; nor did I perceive that I lost his esteem by such conduct. On one occasion, indeed (not political), we had a misunderstanding respecting a point which he very earnestly urged, but which I would not yield, because I was confidently right, according to my most deliberate judgment. This disagreement occurred during a personal interview at his house; but I had scarcely reached home, when I received from him a conciliatory message, which did equal credit to his candour and his condescension. This tribute I gladly pay to the memory of the greatest public character that has done honour or service to Sheffield; and I should prove myself unworthy of his former regards, if I did not thus record the name of Dr. Browne as one of my earliest, longest, and best benefactors."

CHAP. XXII.

1798.

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS IN SUPPORT OF THE WAR.—MONTGOMERY'S EDITORIAL INDEPENDENCE.—OFFENDS DR. BROWNE.—LETTERS TO ASTON.—"A THOUGHT."—ODD FELLOWSHIP.—REDHEAD YORKE AT SHEFFIELD.—PAUCITY OF POLITICAL COMMENT.—"REMONSTRANCE TO WINTER."—"LOSS OF THE LOCKS."

DURING this year, "voluntary contributions," as they were called, were raised by most of the large towns in the kingdom, to meet the exigencies of government in defence of the country; in other words, to assist in carrying on the war against France. The Editor of the "Iris" had all along, in the most explicit and decisive manner, protested against the hostilities which were then raging between the belligerents throughout Europe; and, in consequence of that sentiment, it was now easy to put to the test his independence and integrity. He would, indeed, willingly have been silent on the subject of these "contributions;" but neutrality was rendered impossible; for he received from a gentleman of the first respectability and influence in the town of Sheffield the following paragraph, which he was requested to insert, *as his own*, in the newspaper:—

"The VOLUNTARY SUBSCRIPTION for the defence of the country, under the authority of Parliament, which was opened at this place last week, has met with a general and very spirited support. Indeed the success of it has been

such as must have equalled the warmest wishes of its advocates, who profess (however they may differ on other political subjects) to subscribe, at this awful crisis, in defence of the religion, laws, and constitution of their country, and of its maritime power, trade, commerce, and agriculture, when the destruction of the whole is openly threatened by an insulting and ferocious foe—by an enemy so implacable as to have repeatedly declared, that the constitution of this country and that of France cannot be suffered to exist at the same time, and that, in consequence, "*Delenda est Carthago;*" meaning, "BRITAIN MUST BE COMPLETELY CONQUERED, AND HER BOASTED CONSTITUTION ANNIHILATED."

During the same week, he received another communication, in sentiment diametrically opposite to the foregoing. This was an extract from the "Morning Chronicle," including a speech of Mr. Windham, in 1778, against voluntary contributions: both these articles he *did* publish, in the following week, but accompanied by the following remarks:—

"The Editor of the 'Iris' frankly declares that he can adopt neither of the preceding paragraphs as the expression of his own sentiments on the measure of voluntary contributions: yet such were the peculiar and perplexing circumstances of the case, that he could not have admitted the one and rejected the other, without criminal duplicity—a meanness of which he conceives he has never yet been guilty, as a servant of the public—a meanness to which no terror nor temptation shall compel or induce him to stoop. . . . The Editor of the 'Iris,' like every other man who exercises the privileges of a rational being, has an opinion of his own; but as it is of no more consequence to the public than that of the humblest individual in the town, he chooses to be silent concerning it. That opinion, however, to him is sacred, and by him shall be preserved inviolate. The justice which he renders to others he demands for himself. This will not be denied to him by that respectable portion of

the community, consisting of persons as various in their opinions as they are dissimilar in their looks, whose patronage alone an honest man would wish to deserve and to secure. His highest ambition is, to discharge his duty—his proudest boast, to preserve his independence. On this delicate and embarrassing occasion he conceives that he has fulfilled the former, and that he has not forfeited the latter. But should he ever wilfully violate that duty, and meanly sacrifice that independence, 'may the 'Iris' perish with infamy! May the curse of Cain alight on its Editor! May he want a friend when he most needs him!

"Perhaps at this moment he writes too warmly; but he writes as he feels on the subject. Never, while life and character are dear to him, shall the hand that pens these lines belie the heart that prompts them! In whatever light the conduct of the Editor of the 'Iris' may be viewed by others, he is determined to regulate it entirely by the dictates of his own conscience. Then, if, while sailing between the wind of one party and the waves of another, the little vessel in which he and his fortunes are embarked should be wrecked upon Scylla, or engulphed in Charybdis, he may smile at destruction, and exclaim, with triumphant tranquillity, '*I was not born, I have not lived, I shall not die, a Demagogue or a Parasite!*'"

The resolution not to adopt, AS HIS OWN, the sentiments of any individual—laudable in itself, and invariably acted upon by Montgomery—lost him, in the issue, the powerful patronage and support of the gentleman alluded to, Dr. Browne. For although in this particular case that venerable man got over the chagrin of his first disappointment, another occasion occurred, in which Montgomery again felt it to be his duty to act independently, when, as already stated, he experienced the grief, first, of suffering hard reproaches from his old friend; secondly, of receiving from him a formal message of apology; and, lastly, of knowing that he

had, after all, lost the good-will, or at least the good offices, of an influential individual. Nevertheless, he persevered in his determination not to yield to personal interference, and on no occasion, as we have said, did fear, flattery, or compromise ever open the *editorial* department of the "Iris" to volunteer authorship; at the same time, its columns were ever most unreservedly free to correspondents who chose to criticise his own conduct or opinions, or for the sober and seasonable discussion of topics of real interest and usefulness.

We have given the foregoing case, as in duty bound, exactly as we find it, and we might fairly enough leave it to the unbiassed judgment of the reader; it seems, however, if not to call for, at least to justify a passing observation. With the opinions of those persons who approved, or of those who opposed the war, we have here nothing to do; but it is not so easy to evade the question of Montgomery's right to deal as he did with his two conflicting correspondents, and with his assumption of merit in so doing. The editor of a newspaper is, without dispute, entitled to adopt either an active or a neutral position in reference to politics in general; he is equally at liberty, as a conscientious partisan, to take up the defence of views which may be regarded as extreme by opponents in either direction, or he may act and speak independently on all questions as Montgomery did, and as most newspaper-writers profess to do. It is quite as undeniable that no such individual should, if he can help it, allow himself to be trailed or trapped, drawn or driven into the avowal of his sentiments on any point for merely idle or sinister purposes; but, on the other hand, there are great public questions, involving the responsibility of immediate action, concurrence or resistance, from the duty of speaking out on which, a professed adviser of others

cannot ordinarily shrink under the plea of neutrality, much less of independence. And such a conjuncture appears to have been that which fairly placed Montgomery at issue with his two correspondents. Admitting that he escaped, as he had a perfect right to do, both horns of a formidable dilemma, it was only by getting safely between them: meanwhile, those persons who approved, and those who reprobated the "voluntary contribution," were alike allowed to impale themselves, if for no better end, as a warning to each other! A more single-minded and truer-hearted individual than Montgomery did not exist; but having been twice, and so recently, victimised for alleged libels on the war and its actors, he may unconsciously, if not pardonably, have allowed discretion to take the form, and use the language, of independence in the delicate case before us.

James Montgomery to Joseph Aston.

"Sheffield, March 6. 1798.

"DEAR FRIEND,

" . . . I have been nearly crazed during the last fortnight with the din of jarring politicians. The mania of Voluntary Contributions towards the promotion of this detestable war, has seized upon the inhabitants of Sheffield, as well as in other loyal towns. There are, however, some persons of the greatest wealth and consequence here, who warmly oppose the measure. A kind of paper warfare has been carried on between the two parties; I have been employed by the champions on both sides of the question, and have not objected to print rules, advertisements, &c., for either the one or the other. But determined, at all events, to preserve the independence of the 'Iris', I have peremptorily rejected overtures from both sides to insert essays and paragraphs either for or against the measure. This has exposed me to a great deal of censure and illiberality from the violent of both parties; I have been alternately coaxed and threatened

by each, but have hitherto inflexibly resisted their importunities and despised their menaces. Circumstances of this kind, however tranquil or moderate I may appear in public, wound me in private to the quick. I am too humble to despise the good opinion of the most insignificant of human beings, but I am too proud to purchase patronage from the most exalted by meanness and servility. On calmly reviewing my conduct, I am perfectly satisfied with it on this occasion; but the exertion of such a haughty spirit of independence has cost me inconceivable agony of mind. When this ferment has subsided, I believe I shall not have lost one well-wisher whose friendship was worth preserving.

And so, friend Aston! you can trace me even in 'A Thought.' I imagined I had concealed myself very snugly in so small a compass; but if I had reflected a moment, I might have supposed that I should certainly be detected when my 'Thought' expanded itself, and *the whole universe* be found *in some corner of it!*

"Your sincere and faithful friend,

"J. M. G.

"Mr. J. Aston, Manchester."

The following are the verses alluded to at the close of the foregoing letter: —

"'*A Thought.*'

"While shadowy Night expands his starry wings,
And bears the brilliant moon upon his breast,
Beyond this scene of transitory things
My spirit soars, and all her sorrows rest.

"Come, Contemplation! wonder-viewing maid!
And lift sublime thine intellectual eye;
See the blue galaxy of space displayed,
Behold the living glories of the sky!

"In beautiful magnificence of light,
Legions of radiant luminaries roll;
Like flaming cherubim, with banners bright,
In triumph marching o'er the convex pole.

"Each twinkling beauty beams a mighty sun,
To circling worlds dispensing life and day;
Worlds — that through pathless fields of ether run,
By sister moons attended on their way.

"But who shall trace the dark, bewildering maze,
Where the free WANDERERS OF CREATION roam —
That borrow, from a thousand suns, their blaze,
And make th' unbounded universe their home?

"Rise! — rend the veil of this contracted sky;
Explore the secrets of the dread abyss;
Dart through immensity a seraph's eye,
From earth's dim dungeon to the realms of bliss!

"An awful vision overwhelms the sight!
Where bold imagination never trod, —
The sun of suns, the native land of light,
All Nature's centre — stands THE THRONE OF GOD!

"His throne? — weak worm! where hast thou found His throne?
Canst thou confine the DEITY to place?
Know that He dwells within Himself alone, —
His time, eternity! — His presence, space!"

Montgomery says, in a letter to Aston, dated Sept. *22.* 1798:—

"The present is a second edition of the age of marvels. I have just been down to the Tontine Inn, to receive instructions to print a large number of flaming posting bills, addressed to '*The Enemies of Tyranny, Plunder, and Oppression*,' inviting the Friends of '*Liberty, Religion, and our glorious Constitution*,' to rally round the standard of — of whom? — LIEUTENANT-COLONEL *Henry Redhead Yorke!!!* The regiment is to be baptized '*The Sheffield and Manchester Fencibles*,' to serve in Great Britain and America, *only* during the war. Mr. Yorke, I am informed (for I have not yet had any confidential discourse with him), has been at *Manchester* several weeks — but did not discover himself to his old friends, the reformers."

Besides the placarding of the walls with the "bills" alluded to, there appeared in the "Iris" two columns of extract from Yorke's "Letter to the Reformers," which, according to the "British Critic," exhibited "a full, honourable, and manly recantation of those principles for the promulgation of which the author had suffered a long imprisonment; as also an attested account of his unsolicited appointment to a lieutenant-colonelcy." But the contrast between the ardent reform orator of yesterday, and the loyal recruiting officer of to-day, was too violent for the "men of Sheffield:" they looked on, and laughed, but would not enlist.

The *quasi* mysteries of "Odd Fellowship" had been recently introduced into Sheffield; and as the motives and operations of all secret societies, more especially the Freemasons and their congeners, were indicted for "conspiracy" in Professor Robison's remarkable publication, this precursor of a class of clubs, now become so common under various names, was not exempted from suspicion. Montgomery, on several occasions, expressed opinions on the harmlessness, as well as the whimsicalities of the order.* This year the

* "Among the oddities of this wonder-loving age, we learn that a *club of Odd Fellows* has lately sprung up in this town. With the laws and manners of this right whimsical society we are only imperfectly acquainted. The line of oddity will no doubt admit of as much variety as the line of beauty, which nobody will say is a wrong one, though every body is agreed that it is not a right one. The Negro looks for beauty on a black skin, and the European on a white one: oddity may be equally found in the heart and in the head; in a long nose—a short one—or no nose at all; in a cottage, or in a palace; in a judge's wig, or in a bishop's apron. Wishing these gentlemen every possible success in the pursuit of eccentricities, we could not forbear remarking, on reading their advertisement, that, *odd* as they may be in other respects,

Rev. G. Smith preached a sermon before the "United Lodge," at the parish church, on which occasion the verses entitled "Religion, an occasional Hymn*," were written and sung. This sermon became the subject of much conversation, and of some illiberal strictures; in consequence of which, the editor of the "Iris" entered into rather an elaborate justification of his reverend friend. The following are the concluding paragraphs:—

"The name of the society of *Odd Fellows* has been seriously censured. But what are names? You may christen your pointer, Plato — but is Plato therefore a philosopher? The pointer, in his language, may dignify his master with the name of *Bow Wow* — but is *Bow Wow* therefore a dog? There lives not a man who regards with more sovereign indifference the pageantry of public processions than the writer; but if others delight in such harmless amusements, a noble mind would equally disdain to envy or abridge their pleasure.

"In conclusion, as the appearance of secrecy naturally awakens jealousy, let the public vigilantly watch the proceedings of this eccentric fraternity, and let the latter severely scrutinise their own conduct, guard against imprudence, and study so to live, that whatever their enemies may say to their discredit, none shall believe them. Then,

they are at least *even* with all other clubs in the essential article of celebrating a FEAST! Indeed, without eating and drinking we know not how the soul and body of any club, corporation, or society could be kept together. A feast ties a knot which Father Time himself could sooner cut asunder than unloose. When a man is born there is a feast! when he is married there is a feast! when he dies there is a feast!—even in the grave there is a feast! of which the master does not partake, though he has the happiness to be present — a feast for his brethren and sisters, the worms." —*Iris*, Sept. 1796.

* Works, p. 265

to borrow the beautiful metaphor of the text, men shall no longer prize the tree by the whistling of the winds of calumny that agitate its branches, but '*by their fruits shall they be known.*' Propitious rain and sunshine cannot mellow away the asperity of the bramble, and tempt forth grapes from his reluctant stem; nor can seasons the most inclement, and a soil the most sterile, compel the generous vine to change her nature, and put forth thorns. May this injured society be a cultivated inclosure, where vines and olives flourish in luxuriant pride, untainted by the mildew of detraction, striking roots amidst tempests, and bearing, in redundant profusion, the blessed fruits of FRIENDSHIP, LOVE, and TRUTH!" So much for Odd Fellows.

In the following letter, we not only perceive something of the writer's trepidation of mind, immediately after his escape from some apprehended or threatened prosecution, but we have an affecting glimpse of his mental sufferings at this time, from a source of deeper trial—a wounded spirit; and to this must obviously be attributed much of the melancholy which, whatever the tone of his verse, marked his epistolary communications at this period. While reading what follows, it is impossible not to lament that his correspondent, amiable and intelligent as he was, could not point his friend to the true and only fountain of comfort, to which he was presently directed by the despised Methodist preachers.

James Montgomery to Joseph Aston.

"Sheffield, Feb. 23. 1799.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"Since I wrote to you last, I have suffered much anxiety, and enjoyed little repose in my own bosom. I feel myself at the present moment (between 11 and 12 o'clock on Saturday night), moral[ising] and melancholy. I will therefore, as far as this paper will permit, ease my mind in some small degree, by unveiling some of its weaknesses,

its follies, its vices to you. The *eye* of Friendship will look with tender and indulgent compassion upon them; and I know that the *heart* of Friendship will generously sympathise with the sufferings, which by the cold *head* of Reason may be contemplated with scorn and contempt. Imaginary they may be called; but in my opinion, imaginary ills are the most *real,* because of all others the most inveterate and incurable. A disorder that preys upon the body is quickly cured, or soon wears it away into primitive dust: the worm that gnaws *the vitals of the soul,* partakes of its essence — of its immortality!

"There are three springs of everlasting uneasiness perpetually flowing in my bosom — the cares of life, ambition of fame, and, the worst, the most deplorable of all — religious horrors. With regard to the first, — in my business, chained as I am, like Prometheus to the rock, the vulture of care feeds on my bowels. Since I wrote in September, I have suffered in my mind what I would not again undergo for any temptation which lucre could offer. You may guess what were my sensations, when I tell you, that from the middle of November to the latter end of January, for a trifle which men of firmer minds would have laughed at, I tortured myself with the agonising apprehensions of again being dragged to Doncaster Sessions. I cannot give you further explanation here; the danger is now past, and the spirit of alarm which harassed my dreams by night, and my reveries by day, is laid to rest. I tremble to tread upon its grave, lest the pressure of my foot should awaken it again.

"On the second point — my mad ambition, — ever since last August, my brain has been in the state of Vesuvius during the crisis of eruption. I have been labouring continually upon a spot of Parnassus, which promises to be as unfruitful, as ungrateful to me, as the most barren field I ever cultivated there before. As my plan is still imperfect, and the issue in suspense, I shall wait a little longer before I reveal it to you. If I be successful, I am sure of your congratulations; if I be unfortunate, you shall judge whether I deserved to be so.

"On the last head—my religious horrors—I will be candid, as I have always endeavoured to be to you. [Here followed five lines, which are blotted out in the original letter—they probably refer to the happy experience of his early piety at school.] Such has been my education—such, I will venture to say, has been my experience in the morning of life—that I can never, never entirely reject it, and embrace any system of morality not grounded upon that revelation. What can I do? I am tossed to and fro on a sea of doubts and perplexities; the further I am carried from that shore where once I was happily moored, the weaker grow my hopes of ever reaching another where I may anchor in safety; at the same time, my hopes of returning to the harbour I have left are diminished in proportion. This is the present state of my mind! I do not know whether you will be able, from this hasty, imperfect sketch, to understand your friend any better: I cannot expect that it will increase your esteem; but I trust, though it may make you think less highly, it won't induce you to think less kindly, of

"Your sincere and affectionate friend,

"J. M. G.

"Mr. Aston, Manchester."

Whether the "dread of a prison," which seems to have haunted the editor of the "Iris" like a ghost, or a mere unwillingness to oppose his own views on the war question to those of his fellow-countrymen, who were at least paying a heavy price for their sincerity, had most to do in restraining his pen at this period, we pretend not to say; the paucity of his political comments is certainly remarkable throughout both this and the preceding year. The assessed taxes are tripled; while on the European continent, in Egypt and elsewhere, the most momentous military and naval movements are taking place; the Habeas Corpus Act suspended, volunteers are raised, the income-tax doubled; and yet these movements, in every way so important and exciting, scarcely provoke a dozen paragraphs in

the form of "leaders," during the current twenty-four months of which our pages present this brief record. The place in his newspaper previously and afterwards allotted to political comments, was at this period mostly occupied with articles on the Infirmary, other local charities, and—the theatre!

In April appeared the "Remonstrance to Winter,"* which was unusually protracted and severe, having "commenced in the first week of November, and continued till the first week in May:" nor, as he said, judging from the offerings of his poetical correspondents, "does the vernal season appear to have been more genial in the regions of Parnassus." In July he published, under the title of "Edmund and Ella," his tradition of "The Vigil of St. Mark."†

From a passage in a brief memoir of Montgomery, published many years ago, curiosity was raised by an allusion to, and extract from a poem, which was not only projected and executed, but of which nearly the entire printed edition was destroyed by the author. This procedure, so creditable to Montgomery, was not equally satisfactory to some of his friends: though he told us that he believed Dr. Aikin, Mr. Rhodes, and another individual who never acknowledged the present, were the only persons who at that time had seen the volume. When, in after years, a similar uncorrected copy was placed in our hands by the author, it was accompanied with an injunction, that we would not, on any account, allow it to be transcribed or reprinted, either wholly or in part, as he intended, at some future time, so to cut down and correct it, as to make it a readable poem; and probably print it himself, in order to prevent any

* Works, p. 263., where eleven verses represent the seventeen originally printed.

† Works, p. 219.

surreptitious or malicious publication of a work the existence of which, in its original shape, was to him a source of regret.

The history of this composition was as follows. In Dr. Anderson's "Bee" (vol. xii. p. 76.), some account is given of a mineral found in Siberia, which is composed of fine threads of red shorl inclosed by nature in transparent rock-crystal: these, when regularly disposed, as they sometimes happen to be, resemble those tresses of real hair so often put into lockets or brooches, in honour of some friend, relative, or lover. This *lusus naturæ*, soon after its discovery, was aptly named *cheveux de Venus* (Venus's hair), from its colour somewhat resembling that given by the poets to the Goddess of Beauty. Another variety of this elegant stone which has been discovered, containing *green* instead of *red* tresses, acquired the appellation of "Thetis's hair."

In the same number of the "Bee" (Nov. 14. 1792), a correspondent, signing himself "Arcticus," and who was in reality Dr. Guthrie, physician to the Imperial Cadet Corps at St. Petersburg, the author of several useful mineralogical papers, offered, as prizes for poetical competition, two fine ring-stones of the substances alluded to,—"The first, for the best classical fable of that fair jilt's [Venus] trip to Siberia, and the manner she left her golden locks in a crystal rock. The second, a ring-stone of the sea-goddess's hair, whom they [the poets] must get to Siberia as they can, or the offered stone, its production, will not be within their reach." The gems were in the hands of Dr. Anderson, but what became of them does not appear; there is no record in the "Bee" of either adjudication of, or poetical competition for the prizes.*

* In the notes "To Correspondents," in the "Bee," vol. xv. p. 152., a *prose* composition on the subject is acknowledged.

Accidentally meeting with the volume containing the account of these curious Russian minerals, some time after the periodical had dropped, Montgomery amused his imagination with tracing their origin in the fable before us. It was a work of haste; for, as he once told us, "Though the introductory lines were written five years before the publication of the poem in the 'Iris,' in December 1799, the remainder was composed week by week, as it was wanted by the compositor."

A corrected copy of the work alluded to having been latterly placed in our hands by the author, and without any restriction either expressed or implied as to the use which might be made of it, we shall print it entire at the end of this volume. We do this for two reasons: in the first place, because, as there could be no difficulty in obtaining copies, its present appearance may neutralise the temptation to re-issue the piece in its originally objectionable form; and, secondly, because it is worth preservation for its own sake, as a spirited and ingenious poem; for, however little entertainment the public may have missed by its temporary suppression on the one hand, it will perhaps, on the other hand, be admitted that, while widely different from the later and more chaste productions of Montgomery's pen, it is less discreditable to the author than some persons have imagined.

APPENDIX.

THE LOSS OF THE LOCKS:

A SIBERIAN TALE.

CANTO I.

ONCE on a time;—and you may know
'Tis now three thousand years ago,
Near ancient Troy,—though when and where,
To us is neither here nor there;
Who dare dispute the truth of fable?
When once a poet slips his cable,
He scuds away before the wind,
While in their cockboats, far behind,
Critics in vain pursue the chase,
Distanced alike in time and place.
So the proud swan triumphant sails,
While ducks at distance wag their tails.

Achilles dead, his mother Thetis
Bewailed her son in dismal ditties;
And mourned her own immortal lot,
Since he could die and she could not.
Around her cave a beauteous throng
Of mermaids poured the plaintive song,
And all the tears of those sweet girls
Were metamorphosed into pearls;
Which as they fell they caught with care,
And strung them on their sea-green hair.

Stern Neptune shared his daughter's pain,
And Amphitrite shrieked amain;
Through all the sea the sorrow ran,
The Tritons blubbered to a man.
The billows heaved with such emotion,
There seemed an earthquake in the ocean;
While, blest in vain with hearts of stone,
Relenting rocks returned the moan.
Rapacious sharks released their prey,
And swooned delightfully away;
Herrings, like floating islands, hung
In listening millions on her tongue;
And sentimental shrimps did languish
In all the ecstasy of anguish;
Unwieldy turtles bounced their best,
And seemed deliciously distrest;
E'en sympathising lobsters wailed,
And wondered what their pincers ailed;
Oysters lay gasping in their beds,
And cockles shook their sapient heads;
Crabs clasped their claws, with frantic air,
In all the pathos of despair!

At length the tide, that flowed so high,
Began to ebb in every eye;
Thetis resolved to seek relief,
And in a voyage drown her grief.
The Dame was soon equipt for sea,
(A tighter vessel could not be,)
And all her sorrows, all her charms,
Committed to her legs and arms;
No seventy-four, with all its trimming,
Was ever more expert at swimming:
Though wild and high the surges swelled,
Her lightest touch their wrath repelled.
A fleet of dolphins formed her train,
And gaily gambolled through the main.
Swift as the moon's awakening beam,
Swift as a disappearing dream,

Swift as the whirlwind sweeps the sky,
Swift as a spider snaps a fly,
So swift along the yielding spray
Her gallant elbows won their way.
As when the moon and starry host,
On heaven's tempestuous ocean tost,
Bathe their bright forms in billowy clouds,
Then start in splendour from their shrouds,
And braving wind and weather bleak,
Play all night long at hide and seek,
Thus Thetis with her dolphin-crew,
Alternate rose and sunk from view.
Now in the whelming gulf concealed,
Then fresh in rosy bloom revealed,
Light o'er the glistening wave she glides,
With glowing cheek, and panting sides,
Waves her green locks, and winds her limbs,
The surface circling as she swims;
Fond Ocean clasped her on his breast,
And bore her blushing to the West.

O for immortal Homer's fire,
Or humbler Virgil's sweeter lyre,
To sing, in strains that wildly weep,
My Lady's dangers in the deep!
How like Æneas and Ulysses,
From Scylla's fangs and Circe's kisses,
From self-consuming Ætna's rage,
From Polyphemus' dreadful cage,
Ten thousand thousand perils past,
She fled,—she triumphed to the last!

Now reaching that divided strand,
Where Hercules' huge pillars stand,
Where proud Gibraltar bullies Spain,
She shoots into the western main;
And there her dolphin-train dismisses,
With briny tears and balmy kisses.

Now tost about by tempests frantic,
She stoutly stems the fierce Atlantic;
And all alone, undaunted braves
The roaring wilderness of waves.
Yet Lisbon's rock she shuns with care,—
She dreads the Inquisition there!
Nor nearer Gallia's coast is seen,—
She fears no less the guillotine!
But O! she hails, with proud emotion,
The mighty magnet of the ocean,
That rules the waves where'er they roll,
From sun to sun, from pole to pole—
That sweet, sequestered island-realm,
Where George the Third directs the helm!

"The Inquisition?—George the Third?—
The guillotine?—absurd! absurd!
Did ever such abortive blunders
Disgrace the vilest 'Tale of Wonders,'
Born in despite of Nature's law,
When Bedlam brains were in the straw?
What can the crazy scribbler mean?"—
To leave you to the guillotine;
And in the teeth of railing knaves,
To follow Thetis through the waves.

Now dashing through the Straits of Dover,
The German Ocean crossing over,
Lapland's remotest point she doubles—
There falls into a sea of troubles.
Her courage now begins to fail her,—
Islands of floating ice assail her,
Bulge her sweet ribs with barbarous shocks,
Amidst the crash of falling rocks;
Not Jove himself was more embarrassed,
When, by rebellious Titans harassed,
The mountains rattled round his ears,
And spoiled the music of the spheres.

The goddess thus besieged around,
Sighs for a foot of solid ground,
Strains every sinew, spends her strength,
And in Siberia lands at length.
What strange adventures there befel,
The Muse another time shall tell;
After such tossing on the billows,
My readers languish for their pillows:
Go, gentle friends, and slumber free
From all the dangers of the sea,
For mightier perils, still in store,
The Fates reserve for you on shore.

CANTO II.

The goddess rising with a smile,
Like Egypt from the waves of Nile,
Fresh from the renovating flood,
On the bleak beach astonished stood;
When, all around her, she descried
A ghastly region, wild and wide,
Whose flowerless hills, and famished flocks,
Were howling wolves and horrid rocks;
While chill and wintry blew the breeze,
O'er icy lakes and leafless trees.
Then rushed on her dejected mind,
The classic scenes she left behind,—
The shores of Greece, the Trojan plain,
The islands of the Ægean main,
Those lovely infants of the deep,
On Ocean's lap that smile and sleep!
Then sobs convulsive shook her breast,
Warm gushed the tears, too long represt,

And, paler than the polar snow,
She looked unutterable woe.

Now sweetly sailing with the wind,
Soft on a rosy cloud reclined,
Pensive and pale, and unattended,
The Queen of Love from heaven descended.
At her approach the hideous wild
With melancholy pleasure smiled;
Thus from the womb of ancient Night,
All beauteous sprang created Light;
The infant smiled the mother dead,
Chaos beheld his son—and fled!

The ladies met with marvelling eyes,
That spoke unspeakable surprise;
Thetis at length the silence brake,
And thus the gentle goddess spake:—
"Well! by the polar star, my dear,
What doth the Queen of Beauty here?
Did e'er immortal dame before
Run foul of such a rough lee-shore?"

Venus replied, in accents low,
Light as the flakes of falling snow:—
"While sporting in the fields of air,
All in a curricle and pair,
A vulture scared my harnessed doves,
And put to flight the pretty loves.
In vain I strove with softest words
To soothe my poor affrighted birds;
With trembling hand I tried in vain
To check them with the silken rein:
My wingëd steeds,—more wild than they
That whirled the chariot of the day,
When young Apollo set the spheres
All in a blaze about our ears,—
Their fainting mistress bore on high,
Through many a thousand miles of sky;

Till reaching Winter's dire dominions,
Dead dropped my doves, with powerless pinions:
I fell!—a cloud to save me flew,
And kindly wafted me to you!"

While Venus told her tender tale,
Thetis by turns grew red and pale;
At length she cried,—but scarce could speak,
For both her eyes had sprung a leak,—
"All's well at last, but by this light,
Where, comrade, shall we mess to-night?
The moon you see, o'er yonder vale,
Hath just weighed anchor and set sail;
Her fleet of stars are all afloat,
Each in his little jolly-boat!"

"Behold," quoth Venus, "where a cavern
Invites us like a friendly tavern."

"Crowd every sail then, at a venture,"
Cried Thetis, "helm's a-lee, and enter!"

Reaching the grotto in a minute,
The ladies went to roost within it;
But ah! for lack of feather beds,
They made their pillows of their heads,
Unbound their locks divinely fair,
Veiled their fine limbs in mantling hair,
And slept in sheets of snow so nice,
With blankets of the purest ice,
All comfortable, cold, and clean—
Strange berths for goddesses I ween!
Yet there, in Winter's frozen lap,
Unguarded Beauty stole a nap;
Thus red and white, through withering snows,
The lovely laurustinus blows.

On twilight mountains, stretched afar,
That freeze beneath the polar star,
In wild and melancholy state,
A beldame grasps the shears of fate;

A witch of such tremendous skill,
She wields the elements at will!
With man she claims a kindred birth,
Her limbs, like his, were formed from earth;
The quickening air her breath supplies,
And fire and water are her eyes;
Darkness her veil, her face is light,
Her motion day, her slumber night.
Her varying moods the Seasons bring,
She blushes summer, smiles the spring;
'Tis autumn when she looks serene,
And winter when she has the spleen.
The morning strews her path with flowers,
Which evening bathes in balmy showers;
In her the warbling birds rejoice,
For all their music is her voice.
Ancient as Time, unchanged as Truth,
She glories in perennial youth;
Her floating garments grace the skies,
Clouds of a thousand forms and dyes.
When midnight meteors glance and glare,
She shakes her scintillating hair;
When horrible eclipses happen,
'Tis then she puts her conjuring cap on!
She lends the wandering planets wings,
Holds the fixed stars in leading strings,
And coins new moons, as kings do gold,
From the light clippings of the old.
The sun obeys her daily motion;
Her footsteps petrify the ocean;
The undulations of the tides
Are but the heaving of her sides;
The willing winds her yoke obey,
Hailstorms and tempests cleave her way;
And eager lightnings, prompt to fly,
Pause on the twinkle of her eye;
Deep roll the thunders round her head,
And earthquakes tremble at her tread!

But what can speak her boundless fame?
A word!—for NATURE is her name!

The reader, big with expectation,
Stands like a note of admiration!
Why glare those unbelieving eyes?
Poets are licensed to surprise:
Shall Aristotle or Longinus,
To reasonable bounds confine us?
The bard has neither wit nor sense,
Who cannot oft with both dispense.
Know too, in this enlightened age,
The marvellous is all the rage:
Monsters as naturally are bred
As maggots in a scribbler's head,
While little limits do contain
A mighty wilderness of brain,
Whence fiends and forms, more grim to view
Than Lybian deserts ever knew,
Rush o'er the realms of Truth and Taste,
And lay the world of reading waste!
Genius itself, in wild weeds clad,
With insipidity run mad,
And moon-eyed Nonsense, staring blind,
Have so bewitched the public mind,
That authors must, in times like these,
Work miracles for bread and cheese,
Like conjurors amuse the many,
And raise the devil to raise a penny!

Hold, let us take a little breath,
Nor, swan-like, sing ourselves to death:
With Mother Nature newly drawn,
We'll leave the goddesses in pawn;
But soon in canto third and last,
Make full atonement for the past;
And to redeem our lovely pledges,
Break down all Aristotle's hedges.

CANTO III.

GREAT Nature now, transcendent queen,
Enters our wild Siberian scene;
Around in hushed attention lies,
The theatre of earth and skies;
Not deeper silence, darker gloom,
Lull the cold region of the tomb.
Marshalled in dreadful ranks at hand,
The elements on tiptoe stand,
Spirits that earth and ocean fill,
Or work in fire and air her will;
Impatient each to prove his power,
And rule, the tyrant of the hour,
Yet trembling with mysterious awe,
Live on her look—her look their law!

She came: the clouds before her sight,
Undrew the curtains of the night;
The smiling moon, and stars serene,
Bowed in bright homage to their queen;
Gay northern glories o'er the sky
Broke from the lightning of her eye;
While all the hoary hills below
Shone in the majesty of snow;
The echoing vales with music rang,
For bears and wolves in concert sang;
Shrill piped the gale, and hoarse and deep
The waves responded in their sleep.
Pleased with the scene, th' enchantress smiled
In boundless beauty o'er the wild,
Then, lest its charms too soon be lost,
Bound the resplendent night in frost!
Her awful head she then declined,
And sunk to stillness with the wind;
Cold o'er her nerves the numbness crept,
And chilled her heart-strings—Nature slept!
Outstretched she lay, from west to east,
Six thousand English miles at least:

From gloomy Greenland's coast forlorn,
To where Kamtschatka hails the morn,
The lady's longitude extended,—
And there the frost began and ended!

"How dare you libel Nature thus?
Think not to pass such dreams on us!"
Nay, critics, do not storm about her,
We could not make a frost without her;
And bards, for lack of better means,
Are privileged to use machines:
The Muse had sworn, whate'er the cost,
To pawn Parnassus for a frost;
A frost the story did require,
Though frost had set the world on fire!

When o'er the hills the morning broke,
Thetis and Cytherea 'woke,
But vainly struggled in their beds,
To loose their limbs, and lift their heads;
Those heads that lent their ample tresses,
To wind those limbs in soft undresses,
Those heads the tyrant Frost had bound,
Those limbs enchanted to the ground,
Congealed in ice those radiant locks,
And fixed the goddesses on rocks.

Thus Gulliver, as Swift relates,—
The shuttlecock of adverse fates,—
By winds and waves, with dire commotion,
Borne o'er the solitude of ocean,
Landed at length his luckless foot
On the sweet shore of Lilliput;
Where, like a weather-beaten ass,
He couched and slumbered on the grass;
But waking soon, with horror found
His limbs in cobweb-cables bound,
By every hair upon his head
Chained fast to his terrestrial bed!

With lucid ice encrusted round,
Like flies in beauteous amber found,
Our dames, in cold confinement pent
By Nature's act of parliament,
Pled *Magna Charta* to no purpose,
And sued in vain for *Habeas Corpus*;
Ah! who with Nature can contend,
And hope to triumph in the end?
If at the door the witch you spurn,
Quick through the window she'll return;
Driven from the head, you feel her dart
Through every fibre of the heart!
So when physicians hunt the gout,
The lame distemper skips about
From limb to limb, and stops with ease
The patient's breath, the doctor's fees.

When Jove beheld the mighty odds,
He called a synod of the gods;
Gods who in wood, and stone, and brass,
For very honest men might pass;
But when from brass, and stone, and wood,
The poets made them flesh and blood,
The metamorphosed blocks and logs
Were verily most shabby dogs.

Each minor god assumed his throne;
Jove o'er the rest superior shone,
Much like the Jove of winter nights,
Surrounded by his satellites!
The Thunderer then, with arms a-kimbo,
Told of our goddesses in limbo;
Quick at the news the powers on high
Peeped from the windows of the sky,
Convulsed with laughter when they saw
Immortals bound by Nature's law,
Almost in bankruptcy of breath,
Stretched at the turnpike-gate of Death,

Through which no traveller, on trust,
Did ever pass—or ever must;
Where Time himself, by Fate's decree,
Pays tribute to Eternity!

Momus alone, with solemn grace,
Maintained his fortitude of face,
Bowed at the central throne his skull,
And thus addressed the Great Mogul:—
"An't please your worship, my advice
Would free the ladies in a trice."
"Take counsel," Jove exclaimed, "of you?—
The powers dethrone me if I do!"
"Nay, don't be angry," Momus said;
"Do anything but shake your head."

That moment, such the will of Fate,
With rage the Thunderer shook his pate;
Then rocked the pillars of creation,
Pale Nature reeled on her foundation,
Through every joint she felt the shock
Of Jove's electrifying block;
Oh! then were broken in a trice
Her spell of frost and charm of ice;
Our startled captives raised their heads,
And sprang triumphant from their beds;
But, dire mischance! among the rocks
Left the rich harvest of their locks—
Those locks divine, in ice inurned,
That ice to purest crystal turned!

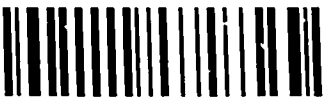
As Berenice's beams appear
Enshrined in heaven's own sapphire sphere,
With ringlets of celestial light,
Dishevelled o'er the brows of Night,
Thus in that cavern's hideous womb,
Twinkling sweet splendour through the gloom,
Those tresses in transparent stone,
A richer constellation shone.

Here the bright sea-nymph's curls were seen,
Like fairy rings of glossy green;
And Cytherea's ravished hair,
A golden treasure, glittered there,
As if the moon enthroned on high,
Had cast her halo from the sky.

The goddesses, struck dumb with wonder,
A moment gazed,—then fled asunder;
Pale Thetis sought her native haven,
And reached old Greece, chagrined and shaven;
There, wandering midst her darkest rocks,
She mourned Achilles — and her locks;
While Venus, on the wings of morn,
Gay as a grasshopper, though shorn,
Flew to the skies, and triumphed there
O'er every head and every hair;
The gods, their wives and daughters sweet,
Laid beards and tresses at her feet:
And every pate and every chin
Was cropt and levelled to the skin;
And to this origin, perhaps,
We owe the birth of wigs and caps:
While love shall reign the sovereign passion,
Beauty will always lead the fashion.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

LONDON:
A. and G. A. Spottiswoode,
New-street-Square.



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on 18 July, 2018